

WEEKLY FREE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR



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Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk January 10, 2016

East edition No 694

WRECK

Bomb ship like you've never seen it before

Latest hi-tech images of sunken wartime munitions vessel

HEALTH

Trust put on life support

Report says it must get better or it may lose control of major hospital

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Let's raise a glass to the latest advice on alcohol

If ever there is a term to make many folk leap into the air and start waving their fists, then 'nanny state' must be it.

This week health chiefs put out advice that - shock, horror - alcohol probably isn't good for us.

As a consequence there were plenty of senior politicians and media folk quick to tell us that we shouldn't take this sort of thing lying down. Nigel Farage even called for 'mass protests'.

Mass protests at what exactly? Unless I'm much mistaken, the advice is nothing more than that; advice. The government hasn't suddenly said we are all to be fixed with booze inhibitors on our throats, or that prohibition is being considered.

What's more, if anyone genuinely believes that alcohol is no-questions-asked good for them then they may have already had a tipples too many.

The state ought to, surely, use what

its researchers and experts discover, to inform our decisions. That's not infringing on our civil liberties. That's not nannying us. It's simply pointing information out to us.

What next? A mass protest at all those nasty people who dared to point out that smoking was horrendously hazardous?

Let's not be silly. This is not 'nanny state'; this is a civilised society reviewing expert evidence and making it public. What would we prefer - this information is withheld for fear we might not like it?

Drinking alcohol is one of life's little pleasures (in moderation), but as with so many of those pleasures there is a consequence of consuming too much. That's nothing new. So let's not mass protest, let's just take it on board and if we want the information to change our habits, or indeed not, then all well and good.



Editor **Chris Britcher**

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Contents

News

- 07 **Farage in road terror**
Ukip leader says his wheels tampered with
- 11 **Festive trees get mulched**
Just where do they all end up now?
- 12 **EastEnders murder hunt**
Neighbours stunned by actress' death
- 14 **Hospital in fresh crisis**
Chief says sorry as it stays as 'inadequate'

- 16 **Dog eats a whole teddy**
Vets had to remove remains in surgery
- 19 **And for my next trick...**
From testicular cancer to magical success
- 20 **Bomb ship in full 3D**
Amazing images of SS Richard Montgomery
- 24 **Rise and rise of diabetes**
Fresh call for action to tackle illness which causes such problems



PAGE 12 »



PAGE 28 »



PAGE 07 »



PAGE 19 »



PAGE 24 »



PAGE 20 »



PAGE 16 »

The Arts

- 28 **Julian Clary faces Q&A**
Comic set to hit the road yet again
- 31 **Ed Byrne set for the stage**
Comic prepares for Tunbridge Wells date

Sport

- 55 **Gills throw lead away**
Leading 2-0, they ended up losing 3-2

Plus

Letters Page 46

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Brace yourself for a 4% hike in council tax bills

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

COUNCIL tax bills across Kent and Medway seem set to increase by nearly four per cent as Kent and Medway chiefs wrestle with more deep cuts from central government.

Both final decisions on the expected price hikes are set to be confirmed when the two councils hold full meetings in February.

There is a cap of 1.99 per cent on increases without prompting a referendum, but both Kent and Medway look likely to take advantage of adding a further two per cent, as permitted by chancellor George Osborne in his autumn statement, to help generate additional funds for social care.

Such a move would see the Kent County Council (KCC) element of the council tax rise on a Band C property from £966.88 to £1,007.60. The final bill residents pay will also include charges for local council services and the likes of the police.

In Medway, a unitary authority therefore with no additional local council levies, it would see an average Band D property rise by



RISES: Expect to see your council tax bill rise when the new budgets are agreed next month

£47 a year to £1,234.89.

KCC describes balancing the books for 2016/17 as "one of the most difficult yet".

Alan Jarrett, leader of Medway Council, said: "Year on year we receive less money from central government, which is quite frankly backing local authorities into a corner and will inevitably lead to cuts in various areas over the coming years, something we have always strived to avoid.

"Continued cuts to our funding will be damaging to the level of service we are able offer local people.

"The 1.994 per cent rise in council tax and the additional social care precept is unavoidable if we want to maintain the important services that residents rely on and deserve."

But it has been criticised by political opponents. Leader of the Medway Labour group, Vince Maple, said: "The Tory led council is having to make this decision

because their government is letting down local people.

"It is the government that is slashing local government finances to the detriment of local people and it is clear to see that David Cameron and George Osborne simply do not understand the impact that this will have on communities."

KCC will finalise its budget on February 11; Medway Council on February 25. Both are still considering their options.

Seven staff suspended after reports of assaults on children in Medway

STAFF at a young offenders' institute in Medway have been suspended following allegations of physical assault.

Following an undercover report from the BBC, G4S, the company responsible for managing the Medway Secure Training Centre, in Rochester were informed of assaults, including intimidation and unnecessary use of restraint by staff.

Seven staff were suspended, including two incident managers, on the same day the company were made aware of the allegations.

It is being reported one boy was punched in the ribs while another was slapped repeatedly across the head.

The allegations claim there was a cover up within the centre, which accommodates for up to 76 young boys and girls aged 14 to 17.

Manager for G4S Children Services Paul Cook told KoS: "These are extreme and shocking allegations. This sort of behaviour has no place in

our service, or any service which has a responsibility to look after young people.

"Staff go through an extensive process before they are hired, including a psychometric test and an enhanced disclosure and barring service.

"The service goes beyond picking up soft intelligence, including whether the person is associated with any inappropriate people.

Following the full checks they have to be approved and certificated by the Youth Justice Board."

Youth Justice Board chief executive Lin Hinnigan responded to the allegations.

She said: "Steps have been taken to safeguard those who are at Medway STC. We have increased our own monitoring activity and the presence of our independent advocacy service, delivered by Barnardos."

Mr Cook confirmed the case will be fully reviewed once Kent Police complete its investigation.

Mast 'bigger than the Shard' proposed for Sandwich site

A US trading firm has announced plans to build a communications mast standing at more than 1,000ft near the former site of Richborough Power Station.

Vigilant Global, a telecommunications company owned by US firm DRW Trading is behind the plans for the mast, which would stand at 1,049ft high near Sandwich - 30ft taller than London's The Shard - and

the tallest in the country.

A full planning application has not been handed in for the site, where three cooling towers and a chimney were demolished in 2012.

Hilary Newport, from the Campaign to Protect Rural England Kent, said: "We reserve judgement until a full application is given, but the scale of this is jaw-dropping. People are just aghast at the size."

City centre water main work gets under way on Monday

MAJOR work on an unreliable water main in Canterbury city centre will get under way on Monday.

The £24,000 project to upgrade 25 metres of the main follows a burst water pipe in St George's Street last January.

The work is needed so the company can continue to pump the five million litres of drinking water

used every day by homes and businesses in Canterbury city centre.

Chris Love, delivery manager at South East Water, said: "We're starting work on Monday, January 11, outside Poundland and Superdrug, a small amount of work will also take place between Wilko and Fenwick. To reduce disruption we avoided Christmas."



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Husband's tribute to Costa Coffee crash victim

TRIBUTES were paid this week by the family of Valerie Deakin - the 74-year-old killed when a car smashed through the window of a Costa Coffee on Christmas Eve in Westerham.

Her husband Paul said of the mother-of-two: "Val, my lovely wife of fifty years, was enjoying a cuppa accompanied by her eldest daughter and best friend.

"The shock and loss are indescribable.

"Modest, kind, exceedingly hard working and above all caring she loved all creatures, great and small, with a passion. We adored her. Rest in peace."

She died when a car driven by an 88-year-old crashed. Five people, including the driver, were hurt - four of them seriously.



RIP: Phil Edbrooke-Childs

NHS chief dies after car hits petrol tanker

FRIENDS and family of a popular business leader have been coming to terms with his tragic death this week - killed after his car collided with a petrol tanker on Monday.

Phil Edbrooke-Childs was managing director of Kent and Medway Health Informatics Service, a technology provider for the NHS.

He was pronounced dead following the crash which happened just after 9.30am on Hermitage Lane in Aylesford.

The NHS announced the death of the 36-year-old from Dover on its website, saying: "Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends."

Mr Edbrooke-Childs previously worked at the BBC for four years introducing new technology to television and radio producers.

He then ran his own business before moving into both the commissioning and provider sectors of the NHS, leading corporate and IT developments on behalf of local trusts.

Away from work he loved spending time with family and friends.

Police are still appealing to witnesses to the crash to come forward with any information they may have.

If so, they should contact Kent Police's Serious Collision Investigation Unit on 01622 798538 quoting 04-0242.

Discussions begin over compensation payments due to rail track collapse

By Tom Pyman

b p1

TRAIN firm Southeastern has confirmed it is "considering" compensation for passengers after major problems on the track between Dover and Folkestone show no sign of a swift resolution.

Engineers fear the stretch of railway could be closed for months after admitting there is "severe damage" and a number of three metre deep sinkholes along the track.

Trains have been prevented from travelling along the stretch which has seen high tides damage the sea wall that supports the railway near Dover harbour, after cracks were discovered on Christmas Eve.

Since then, the wall has deteriorated further. It means peak high speed services and most off peak services are unable to stop at Dover Priory, Martin Mill, Walmer, Deal or Sandwich. A replacement bus service is in place but commuters have faced extended journeys on their re-



DAMAGED: Sea wall to be rebuilt

turn to work after the festive break.

This week, a Southeastern spokesperson said: "Compensation for the problems is currently being considered.

"The problems in the Folkestone and Dover area are obviously an in-

convenience to passengers who use the affected stations.

"The high speed is also running between Folkestone West and St Pancras and we advise all passengers in the area to check their journey before travelling."

Chris Denham, spokesperson for Network Rail, which is responsible for the track, said: "At the moment we are concentrating on providing rock armour, which is large lumps of rock used to protect the sea wall.

"We've had large amounts arriving ever since it happened and there will be more arriving as the weeks go by - that's the priority at the moment, to protect what's there.

"The delivery of the rock is going well and we are protecting it as best we can.

"We also have a team of designers who are working on a number of ideas for a solution.

"We have a variety of options which are being discussed and we'll soon have a timescale and estimated cost but we're in the early stages at the moment."

Free school hitch puts opening back a year

THE opening of a new free school in Tonbridge has been deferred until 2017.

Bishop Chavasse Primary Free School was due to open in September this year and provide 420 places, but the opening has been pushed back after a failure to complete the purchase of the site.

Executive headteacher Ian Bauckham said: "Although we realise this will be disappointing for many of the school's supporters, and we are all too aware how much this new school is needed in Tonbridge, we believe the decision will be for the best in the long term.

"It gives certainty to parents seeking primary school places for 2016, and it will mean that the new school will aim to open on its permanent site and in its brand new building, rather than opening on a temporary site in its first year."

Tom Tugendhat, MP for Tonbridge, said: "I will be writing to the education secretary to ensure all remaining negotiations are completed quickly, so that construction can begin as soon as possible."

Child abuse images leads to prison term

A DARTFORD man found with 167 indecent images of children, and 59 videos on his laptop, has been jailed for two years and eight months.

Scott Harrison, 40, formerly of Willow Road, pleaded guilty to six charges of making indecent images of children and a further charge of possessing indecent images with intent to show them as he was sentenced at Maidstone Crown Court.

The sentencing comes after it was reported in May that Harrison had been distributing indecent images of children online.

Harrison was subsequently arrested and his computer equipment was seized.

Investigating officer Det Con Kinga Hammersley said: "Harrison deliberately sought out images and videos of children who had been subjected to horrific abuse. Children subjected to this kind of abuse will have to deal with its psychological affects for the rest of their lives. They often come from vulnerable backgrounds and their abusers take advantage of that in the most appalling way."

Tony Hart dies again across social media

MOST famous people only manage to spark mourning for their passing once.

But for Maidstone legend Tony Hart, famous for his BBC art shows, news of his death made headlines again this week.

The star of children's favourites Take Hart and Hart Beat died back in 2009 - but for the second time since his death, social media became filled with news of his passing.

Among those duped into circulating old reports was TV personality Piers Morgan who tweeted how "very sad" he was about it.

It's not the first time his death has repeated - two years ago Twitter and Facebook users once again fell victim to repeating the old story.

It spread so much that the Daily Telegraph's original story reporting his death became the most shared this weekend.

Tony Hart was born in Maidstone in 1925 and studied at the Maidstone College of Art - now the Kent Institute of Art and Design.

Ukip leader Farage escapes tragedy as car tampered with

By Scott D'Arcy

editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

NIGEL Farage has said police suspected sabotage after a wheel on his Volvo fell off while he was driving on a motorway.

The Ukip leader, who lives in Westerham, claimed nuts on all of the wheels of his V70 were found to be loose after the "frightening" crash on a French road near Dunkirk.

He described how he was forced to stop after losing control on the motorway, fleeing the car and darting over a barrier to avoid oncoming traffic.

He told the Mail on Sunday: "It was in the middle of bloody nowhere, and I was caught in a very bad position. There was a huge section of roadworks with cars going back and forth on the same side of the carriageway.

"I suddenly realised I was losing steering but there was no hard shoulder to pull on to. I slowed down, put the hazards on and then one of the wheels came off. I jumped over the wall as quickly as I bloody well could to get away from lorries and everything."

When police arrived, they reportedly told him the cause was a malicious act but he decided not to take action.

He said: "The French police looked at it and said that sometimes nuts on one wheel can come a bit loose - but not on all four.



RELIEVED: The wheels of Mr Farage's car fell off on a busy French motorway

"The French police and mechanics looked at it but I have made no formal complaint. The mechanics were absolutely certain of (foul play) but I have decided to take no further action."

He told the paper he had received death threats in the past but, when asked who he thought might be responsible, said: "I haven't got a clue. Quite frankly, the way my life's been over the past two and a half years, nothing surprises me."

The crash, which happened in October last

year while he was returning from a trip to Brussels, is not the first time the MEP has been involved in a life-threatening situation.

Mr Farage had to be pulled from the crushed cockpit of a plane after an election banner caused it to crash in May 2010.

The PZL-104 Wilga 35A light aircraft came down after the tow line for the sign became wrapped around the tailplane, an investigation by the AAIB found.

Mr Farage suffered broken ribs, bruised lungs and facial injuries.

Could county be set for snow this week?

FORECASTERS are predicting the icy snap to continue into the coming week - and warn there could be the chance of snow across the county.

With more cold winds, temperatures will feel sub-zero for much of the week - with a colder spell expected from Wednesday, says the Met Office.

It said: "There is likely to be a mixture of sunshine and showers, with sleet or snow on lower levels."

Torrential rain sees rivers break banks

PARTS of Kent found itself under water this week as prolonged heavy rain saw rivers break their banks.

Kent Fire & Rescue Service said it received 40 flooding calls in less than 24 hours - most of which were around the Dover, Deal, Folkestone and Hythe areas - as well as Yalding.

A number of roads were forced to shut.

Johnson memorial

A SERVICE to mark the 75th anniversary of the death of record-breaking British pilot Amy Johnson took place in Herne Bay on Tuesday.

She died serving her country off the Herne Bay coast on January 5, 1941, aged just 37, with her body and the wreckage of her plane never found.

The Amy Johnson Herne Bay Project aims to celebrate and remember the pilot.



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Tributes paid to GP killed as he walked on New Year's Eve

TRIBUTES have been paid to a popular GP killed after being hit by a car in Dartford on New Year's Eve.

Dr Wilson Fok, 59, worked in Erith and neighbouring areas for 30 years and was described by his family as a "true gentleman", "amazing father" and "real family man".

He died after being struck by a Mercedes Vito van in Heath Lane at around 7.50pm, as he walked along with his wife. She was not seriously injured in the crash.

The driver of the van is not reported to have suffered any injuries and no arrests have been made.

In a statement issued this week, his wife and children said: "He was a loving husband, wonderful father, loyal friend and well respected GP.

"We are all absolutely devastated



by this loss. Dad was an amazing father and real family man. Our house was always full of love and laughter.

"He has a huge family contingent in Hong Kong and regularly went

back to visit; he loved tennis and played regularly with his merry band of tennis friends; he was learning French; enjoyed sailing and went ballroom-dancing every week with Mum."

Viaduct the result of all that rail chaos over Xmas

AFTER 10 days of engineering work – which caused major headaches for Kent travellers heading into London during the festive period – a new viaduct has been brought into use at London Bridge, carrying trains to Charing Cross and Waterloo East.

It's all part of the Thameslink programme's rebuilding of the railway and station at London Bridge.

It saw no Southeastern trains calling at London Bridge, Waterloo East, Charing Cross and Cannon Street.

Thameslink programme director Simon Blanchflower said: "I would like to thank passengers for their patience this Christmas and New Year while we brought our new viaduct and signalling system into use. With fewer passengers

travelling than at other times of year, Christmas gives us the best opportunity to do this kind of major work.

"By opening Borough Viaduct, we have been able to take two existing tracks out of use for rebuilding, which is a crucial step in the ongoing reconstruction of London Bridge station. Platforms alongside those new tracks are rapidly taking shape and we are looking forward to opening new station concourse in August this year."

Southeastern's managing director, David Statham, said: "The work that took place over the Christmas period to bring a new viaduct into use meant we were unable to serve some of our main central London stations for ten days."

Water main work begins

SOUTH East Water will be installing a new section of water main along the A20 London Road in Aylesford, with exploratory holes being dug this weekend.

Work started at 9pm on Saturday and should finish by 5.30am on Monday morning. Lanes will be narrowed as a result.

Nightclub fire exercise

FIRE crews will carry out an emergency exercise as a former Folkestone nightclub on Wednesday evening.

Up to 25 firefighters will take part at the site of the old Onyx nightclub in Marine Gardens Pavilion. The public are told not to be concerned.

Ready, set, register now

ENTRIES are open now for the Folkestone Coastal 10k – the ideal target for those looking to start running as part of their new year resolutions.

The event, which raises money for charity, takes place on May 29. To enter, see www.folkestonecoastal10k.co.uk.

Classic car table topper

KENT has the highest amount of classic car owners in the UK, according to recent survey.

Insurer Carole Nash says the county is home to six per cent of the nation's vintage vehicles, beating nearest rivals Essex and Surrey.

Some days the freezer is far enough to go for something tasty to eat.



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Top Three Stories



1. EastEnders murder

Three bodies found in Sian Blake's garden

2. Crossing debate secured

Problems will be discussed in Commons

3. Kent set for snow?

It will feel like -1 in Ashford next week

The Essential Guide:



...to the Dartford Crossing

Everything you need to know about the Dart Charge



FEATURED PHOTO GALLERY: People gathered by the pier in Herne Bay on Tuesday to remember the 75th anniversary of the death of legendary pilot Amy Johnson. Photos: Mike McLaughlin Photography

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Top Three Blogs



1. Lotto's £50m lunacy

Meet the man who was convinced he'd win

2. Let's cut IS publicity drive

Should group's video make such big headlines

3. Haunted by Xmas pud

Will it ever leave the fridge this year?

Results of the KoS Online Poll

Did you take part in the lottery this week?

- 1 Yes - I always play - 21%
- 2 Yes - just this once - 29%
- 3 No - but I will on Saturday - 43%
- 4 No - I never play - 7%



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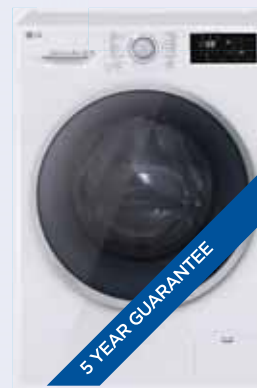
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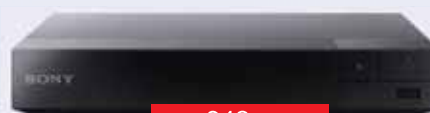
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From pride of place to being mulched; your tree's journey

With the decorations now down, the next stage begins in turning your Christmas tree into something which will benefit the county's rural economy throughout the rest of this year...

By Chris Murphy

d b @

LAST weekend almost every home in the county proudly displayed a Christmas tree.

One week on, and many of the firs are now taking the first steps on a two-month journey to be recycled into compost.

Twelfth night – the day, traditionally, when all festive decorations should be packed away – passed on Tuesday.

But for many, the big challenge now is just what to do with the tree we had stood so proudly in our homes to celebrate the season of goodwill.

And the good news is that if you dispose of it properly, it will be recycled and eventually end up enriching the very soil the county relies on to feed its agricultural roots.

According to the Christmas Tree Association, around a third of us opted for a real tree each year. And while the artificial ones can be disassembled and put back in the attic, real trees prove great compost and that's why thousands of us use our local authority facilities to recycle them.

Not all councils collect, but most do.

Medway Council is one that does. A spokesman explains: "We collect Christmas trees from the kerbside along with residents garden and food waste. We advise residents to leave their whole tree next to their brown wheelie bin or brown garden sacks for collection."

"Christmas trees can also be taken to any of the three household waste and recycling centres.

"They are taken to an in-vessel composting facility at Sittingbourne called the Country-style Group, where they are shredded along with food and garden waste.

"The shredded material is composted inside temperature-controlled bunkers for one week, where it reaches 70 degrees centigrade. "The product is then left to mature for 6-8 weeks before being used as a soil improver on Kent farms.

"Christmas trees taken to the household waste and recycling centres go through a similar process and the product used for similar applications but, in the absence of food waste being mixed in with them, can be composted in open air.

"Around eight million Christmas trees will have been bought in the UK.

"We don't have a specific estimate for Medway but with just over 110,000 homes it would be reasonable to suggest we will

collect several thousand trees.

"Last year saw a large increase in organics being collected over Christmas period; however we are unable to identify the reasons for this. It could be increase in trees, garden waste or food.

"There are many benefits to recycling. Environmentally it allows natural resources to be used again, in the form of compost to help grow new crops and trees. Economically, Medway Council saves nearly 50 per cent on costs when organic matter is recycled into compost, compared to being sent to landfill."

While councils like Thanet do not provide any help, in Shepway, the council will collect it for free and send it to a local farm to be mulched.

And if you've signed up to the council's garden waste collection service you can put the tree next to your brown lidded bin on your normal collection day after January 8.

The key way to have your tree collected by the local authority is signing up to the green waste schemes offered - although they often come at an additional cost.

To find out if it's available to you, just contact your local council.

A spokesman for Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council said: "It is almost impossible to calculate how many trees are thrown out or recycled as we don't know how many residents will put them out until we collect them.

"But putting your real Christmas tree out for collection is the most environmentally friendly way of disposing of it. Residents with a compost heap may want to compost their real tree on it, rather than having it collected. However, our collection service caters also for those who don't have compost heaps, as well as composting the tree down quicker than on a home compost heap."

Kent County Council confirmed knowing numbers accurately is tough to estimate as many organisations are involved.

It said people in areas where there is no council collection can take their trees to 21 tips around Kent, which will also take artificial trees.

Meanwhile, if you live in Ashford, you can get your tree collected - and help raise vital funds for a worthwhile cause.

The Pilgrims Hospice will collect your tree for a small donation, with every penny raised going towards the palliative care it offers.

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DOWN: But not necessarily out, as the trees are destined now to become soil compost

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EastEnders actress murder hunt prompts case handling probe

Neighbours near the detached home of actress Sian Blake have been left stunned after a week in which a missing persons' investigation dramatically escalated into an international murder hunt...

AN INVESTIGATION has been launched into Scotland Yard's handling of the Sian Blake case.

The Independent Police Complaints Commission will examine the response to concerns for the welfare of the former EastEnders actress and her two young sons Zachary and Amon, as well as the subsequent missing persons inquiry.

It is understood concerns about domestic violence were raised by a relative of Ms Blake to the NSPCC on December 16.

A missing person's investigation started on the same day after police attended the family home in Erith.

On Tuesday – almost three weeks later – three bodies were discovered in the garden of the property, triggering a murder inquiry.

Arthur Simpson-Kent, Ms Blake's former partner, is being sought by police. He is believed to have fled to Ghana.

Confirming that an investigation is under way, the IPCC said police began their enquiries following a "report of concern" by visiting the home where officers spoke to Simpson-Kent.

"Sadly, the bodies of Sian and her two children were found at the Pembroke Road address 20 days later, on January 5," the watchdog said.

"The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) investigation will examine the police response, actions and decision-making following the reported concern for welfare."

ITV News obtained photographs of Mr Simpson-Kent, 48, at Kotoka Airport in the Ghanaian capital Accra – three days after he was quizzed by police over the family's disappearance.

Yesterday, Ms Blake's sister Ava said he will have to "answer to God" for his alleged actions, revealing that her sibling had told their mother, Pansy, that she wanted to get out of her relationship "a long time ago".

Ms Blake, 43, had motor neurone disease – a fatal, rapidly progressing illness which affects the brain and spinal cord – and was reportedly looking "very frail" before she vanished.

She was last seen with her sons in Waltham Forest, east London, on December 13.

Post-mortem examinations indicated that the three died as a result of head and neck injuries.

IPCC associate commissioner Tom Milsom said: "The loss of Sian and her two young boys Zachary and Amon, is a tragedy and my thoughts are with their family during this very difficult time."

"The IPCC will be conducting a thorough investigation into how police responded to the concerns for their welfare and their disappearance."

The identities of Ms Blake, 43, and



BODIES: Police remove the three bodies found in the garden. Zachary and Amon below. All photographs: PA



ACTRESS: Sian Blake

two sons Zachary, 8, and Amon, 4, were only confirmed on Thursday evening.

Police sniffer dogs led officers to make the grim find at the property where "significant attempts" had been made to conceal the family's remains.

Next-door neighbour Sam Sanni-Alashe said: "I am in shock, This is a disaster and it is awful for the community. I can see everything in the garden but these last few days I have chosen not to look."

Another neighbour, Hannah Cutting, 18, said: "I would see the kids playing at the window, then we were worried when police were there 24/7. It's awful just to think that something can happen on your doorstep and you see people and you have no idea what's going on."

Ms Blake, who played soul singer Frankie in EastEnders, appeared in the BBC soap for 56 episodes between 1996 and 1997, reportedly quitting because of hostility from viewers towards her manipulative character.



WANTED: Above, police want to speak to Arthur Simpson-Kent



GUARDED: The family's home in Erith where the bodies were found in the back garden on Tuesday

DID POLICE COSTS PLAY A ROLE IN SLOW RESPONSE?

A FORMER murder detective told a national newspaper this week he feared the costs of policing over the Christmas period may have been a factor in any apparent delay in the Sian Blake case.

Former Met Police detective Colin Sutton said: "There is greater pressure than ever not to waste money that may have influenced the decision making."

"If the search had taken place over Christmas it would have been three times the price because of the overtime."

"Fortunes had been earmarked in overtime payments to police the New Year's celebrations and all those bank holidays. The last thing the Met needed in the current financial situation was an

expensive murder inquiry."

"It was the wrong decision and a bad decision and it's noticeable that as soon as everyone got back to work after Christmas on Monday morning that things really started happening."

The family of Ms Blake have said they "want answers" about why it took police nearly three weeks to find what are feared to be the bodies of her and her two sons.

One of the 43-year-old's aunts, who gave her name as Terry, has said relatives want "a full investigation".

On Wednesday the Met said: "An initial review has highlighted some potential issues regarding the handling and grading of the missing persons investigation."



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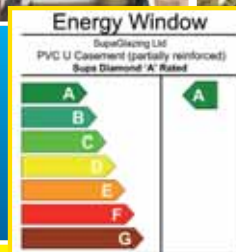
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Time is ticking

The trust which runs the Medway Maritime Hospital in Gillingham has, once more, been branded 'inadequate' by regulators and told it is to remain in special measures. Now it's been told it must shape up, or risk being taken over...

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

HEALTH chiefs in Medway have said 'sorry' after the Medway NHS Foundation Trust was described as "inadequate" and left in special measures, following the latest inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The independent regulator for care services found the trust, which operates the Medway Maritime Hospital in Gillingham, still struggling with a number of key issues, with its A&E department "not able to cope" and long waiting times to see doctors.

More worryingly, it said in some areas performance has "deteriorated" despite cross-agency support.

It described the trust's state of health as "extremely concerning" and also reported that even senior figures had felt "bullied".

It also warned that unless improvements were made swiftly, the trust could find itself consumed by another trust or the Department of Health.

Many of the findings had previously been revealed in an interim report shortly after the visit in August and September last year.

Inspectors found the trust still needed to make significant improvements to ensure it was consistently delivering care which was safe, effective, caring, and responsive to people's needs.

But the troubled trust, which has seen a new management team installed in a bid to turn its fortunes around, says it is "absolutely focused on improving the services we provide".

It insists standards are slowly improving after "years of instability and poor management".

At the time of the inspection, the chief inspector of hospitals, Professor Sir Mike Richards, raised his immediate concerns about standards of patient safety in A&E with the trust, NHS England and local commissioners.

CQC found that at the busiest times, the emergency department was not able to cope with the numbers of patients attending. People in need of treatment were waiting too long to see a doctor, or were being left unattended while they waited.

Following that intervention, the trust and commissioners took action to ensure that there were more staff on duty and patient flow throughout the emergency department was more effective.

The latest report also highlights continuing concerns with medical care, surgery and outpatient and diagnostic services which were also rated inadequate.

Professor Sir Mike Richards said: "Since September we have made sure that we have been kept fully aware of all action taken by local clinical commissioning groups, local authorities and NHS England to ensure that the trust's urgent and emergency services can deliver safe, effective, compassionate and high quality care, and we are continuing to work closely with all agencies.

"While those immediate safety mat-

ters have been dealt with for the time being, I am not satisfied that the underlying issues throughout the trust have been resolved. It is disappointing to report that performance may even have deteriorated in some areas, despite the support which has been offered to the trust up until now.

"Once again we have rated Medway NHS Foundation Trust as inadequate for safety, responsiveness and being well-led. This is extremely concerning, both in terms of the quality of care that people can expect from the trust, and for what it says about the trust's ability to improve.

"It is our shared view with Monitor [the government's health regulator] that this situation must not be allowed to continue. It is clear that the trust cannot solve these important issues on its own, and will require continued support for the foreseeable future.

"We are now considering, along with partner agencies, the best option available in order to improve services rapidly for the local population. In these circumstances, it would be inappropriate to recommend that the trust leave special measures."

Lesley Dwyer, chief executive of the trust and recruited on a salary of £225,000 last year in a bid to help steer it out of troubled waters, said: "I accept the conclusions of the report and am sorry that we are currently falling short of what the people of Medway and Swale deserve. We know we need to improve the services we provide and are absolutely focused on doing just that. The trust has suffered from years of instability and poor leadership and governance. This cannot be remedied overnight.

"I recognise the challenges we face. We assessed ourselves as inadequate ahead of the inspection in the summer and have been taking action since then to improve the care we provide. However, there are a whole range of new measures we must take, immediately."

Among the steps promises is 'modernising' the A&E department, improving patient safety, accelerating its recruitment drive to bring in top quality staff, improving its clinical and corporate governance, improving cancer care and working closely with healthcare partners to ensure patients receive the right care in the community when they are ready to leave hospital.

Ms Dwyer, who expects another CQC visit within six months, added: "I know that there is a great deal that is good in this hospital that we can build upon. We have fantastic staff



as trust warned by CQC yet again



TROUBLED: There remain a string of significant concerns by inspectors over Gillingham's Medway Maritime Hospital

who have been praised by the CQC for their compassion and support for patients, and given a 'good' rating for caring.

"The report also shows that quick and sustained improvements are possible; a year ago our maternity department was rated as requiring improvement and it is now rated as good.

"This hospital is here to serve the people of Medway and Swale. In the next few days and weeks, we will do everything we can to address the challenges raised in the report, so that we provide the best possible healthcare

that those people need and deserve."

Union chiefs, however, insist the problems are due to a prolonged lack of funding by central government.

The trust had originally been placed into special measures by Sir Bruce Keogh in July 2013 because of concerns about mortality rates and standards of care.

It put the brakes on a proposed merger between the trust and the Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust which runs Darent Valley Hospital in Dartford. The merger had

been two years in the planning.

After further inspections by CQC in 2014, the chief inspector of hospitals recommended the trust remain in special measures.

During the latest inspection, inspectors found that although there had been some improvement since 2014, staffing levels across the hospital were still too low to meet people's needs. The trust remained heavily reliant on the good will of staff to undertake extra shifts and temporary agency and bank staff to ease the pressures.

On the medical wards, clinical areas were not clean and hygienic and some needed refurbishment. Not all staff were completing their mandatory training and there were shortfalls in nurse staffing levels. Patients were frequently treated in mixed-sex wards, or were not discharged when they were ready to leave hospital.

Inspectors were concerned at how the trust managed and responded to incidents. Not all staff had access to the system for reporting incidents. There was no evidence to suggest that lessons had been learned following a never event.

The trust was consistently not meeting their two-week targets for patients suspected with cancer and there were delays in patients getting scans, which meant they had to wait too long for treatment.

At board level, inspectors questioned the ability of the board to drive the level of improvement required or to hold the leadership to account, especially in relation to concerns about quality, safety and specifically the longstanding poor mortality rates.

The vision and values of the organisation were not well developed or understood by staff and some staff, including members of the executive team, reported feeling bullied.

Inspectors found that despite the overall findings, across the trust, the staff provided compassionate care in almost all their interactions with people in their care. Patients spoke positively about the staff and said that they considered that their privacy and dignity had been maintained in most cases.

The Care Quality Commission will present its findings to a local 'Quality Summit', including NHS commissioners, providers, regulators and other public bodies. The purpose of the summit is to develop a plan of action and recommendations based on the inspection team's findings.




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The dog who ate whole teddy bear

A POORLY stray Husky, handed in to a dog's home in Canterbury, has had his ailment diagnosed – he'd eaten a large teddy bear whole.

Two-year-old Ramzez had arrived at the Dogs Trust Canterbury with severe diarrhoea, leaving staff perplexed at what was making him so ill.

He underwent a series of tests to rule out various causes, but when all the results came back inconclusive, the team remained baffled as to what was causing the poor pooch's tummy troubles.

Vets decided to operate to see if they could solve the mystery of his digestive difficulties once and for all and were astonished by what they found.

An endoscopy revealed a large blockage resembling a fur ball, and when the vets

opened up Ramzez's intestines, they found the remnants of a large teddy bear measuring 15cm long.

The fluffy remains were swiftly removed and after recovering, Ramzez was soon bouncing back to his playful self.

Since then he has been rehomed.

Adam Levy, Dogs Trust Canterbury rehoming centre manager, said: "Ramzez is a cheeky chap who definitely brought new meaning to a teddy bear's picnic with his escapades.

"Thankfully, it wasn't more serious and he is now on the road to recovery. We are astonished that he managed to swallow a teddy bear whole but since his operation, he is a much healthier dog and his tummy troubles are under control. He certainly had a lucky escape.

"It is very common for dogs to chew on anything and everything but only a few will actually swallow items that are obviously inedible. It's important for owners to be vigilant and remove toys or foreign objects if they suspect their dog may ingest them.

"Although Ramzez's story had a happy ending, not all dogs recover quickly and can suffer with pain and discomfort for days to weeks before their owners realize something is wrong. Anyone rehoming a young dog needs to keep their eyes open for possible dangers and seek advice from a vet if they have concerns that anything has been swallowed that shouldn't have been."



REMAINS: Just some of the hapless bear scoffed by Ramzez



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'Magic let me in,' says performer who beat cancer and gave up job

Neil Edwards, 39, tells Tom Pyman how magic helped him overcome testicular cancer and why the "introverted show-off" is giving up his TV career to follow his dream of becoming a professional

A CHISLEHURST magician has told the story of how his love of magic has driven him to beat testicular cancer and now pack in his career to perform full time.

Neil Edwards, 39, worked in a media archive for a business news channel, but has now taken the bold step of leaving a secure job to follow his dream of becoming a professional.

He told KoS: "Giving up my job scares the hell out of me but I want to follow my dream and it's something I would always regret if I didn't do it.

"I have my own weekly magic night in a cocktail bar in central London, which brings in some money but going full-time was a big step.

"I was mulling it over and everyone said 'why don't you just go for it?'

"I've had a lot of hobbies over the years, like astronomy and DJing, but magic is the one thing that has stuck. It defines me.

"Even when I worked in TV when someone asked what I do, I'd say I'm a magician.

"Apparently only one in 70 people have truly seen magic close up, and therefore I see it as a responsibility to show them how good it can be.

"Everyone has been extremely supportive of my decision - not a single person has said 'you shouldn't do this,' if anything they've said 'it's about time.'"

Mr Edwards' passion for magic didn't stem from childhood, but rather the way it kept him occupied when he was diagnosed with testicular cancer aged 19, during a university course in Ashington, just north of Newcastle.

"The illness lasted nine or ten months," he said.

"I noticed a lump and ignored it, before eventually going to my GP who immediately sent me to the hospital and within a day and a half I was in surgery to have it removed.

"Some tests came back as inconclusive and the cancer could have spread so I underwent courses of chemotherapy.

"I was lucky because my survival chances were 98 per cent but it was still a really difficult time.

"I wasn't able to work for nine months and my hair fell out - although I'm nearly 40 now so I'm back where I started.

"It was pretty scary - there's going to be fear when people shout 'the big C' at you, and it's eye-opening going to cancer day centres where people are in a bad way.

"For me, though, the overriding emotion was probably boredom. At 19, you just want to go out and do things but with the cancer you can't go very far and have to be careful.

"While in the hospital, a friend bought me a cheap, plastic magic set,



MAGIC: Neil Edwards is following his dream of being a professional performer

which consisted of three little egg cups and three sponge balls and I just became obsessed playing with them.

"Within three or four months I had mastered everything and my passion continued to grow from there.

"A joke present has essentially brought me to where I am now.

"I had all this time and magic was my escape, and if it wasn't for this whole situation I wouldn't be doing what I am today."

As well as helping him overcome illness, magic has been invaluable to Mr Edwards in social circles, and it was through his performances that he met his partner of 10 years, Michelle.

"I've always been an introverted show-off," he said.

"At a party I would sit quietly in the corner but would do things and slowly begin to attract attention. Magic let me in.

"I met Michelle because I was performing for friends in a pub and that helped break the ice a little bit because otherwise I would have been quite shy.

"On a night out I'll have pockets full of cards, rope and forks that I can bend.

"I'm always happy to perform and with just a few props like that you can get hours of material."



While family and friends have always been supportive of his magic, Mr Edwards admits his obsession can grate at times for those around him.

He said: "It can be an annoyance to people around me when I am practicing - I'll be in the room but I'm not in the room, because I'm so engrossed in the magic.

"It drives Michelle mad because I'm always looking at stuff, if I see a salt shaker I'll be wondering what I can do with it, my mind is always whirring.

"Also some of my best ideas come to me about five minutes before I go to sleep, so I annoy her by having to get out of bed to find a notepad and pen to write it down.

"I'm definitely a perfectionist and my own harshest critic but you have to be in this business.

"Every trick I do I take it away and

RECOVERY: His love of magic helped him overcome testicular cancer

change it slightly because I think it can always be improved - I could do it 10,000 times and it still wouldn't be right.

"I've tried tricks before and some people just don't get it, much like when a comedian tests out a few jokes before a gig.

"I don't see that as frustrating, it's just part of the process, and it's never a total loss because I've learned a skill, and rather than bin the idea altogether I just think of how I can alter it slightly and present it in a better way."

While Mr Edwards says he admires the glamorous show-stopping acts performed by the likes of David Blaine, Dynamo and Derren Brown,

he says he's more comfortable performing up close and personal.

"The buzz is from the reaction - the look in the person's eye where they don't believe what they've just seen is an incredible feeling.

"I never get bored of seeing someone's jaw drop, or their eyes pop out.

"It's about the aesthetic exploration of mystery, and while all art forms explore mystery, magic is the only one solely about mystery.

"Most people don't realise how powerful it is until they see it up close, and that's why I do it.

"The stunts are not my cup of tea - there are certainly no plans for me to be swinging from the QEII bridge any time soon."

Bomb ship like you've never seen her before

Latest hi-tech 3D images from coastguard reveal full detail of the stricken SS Richard Montgomery off Sheppey coast

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

THE latest technology has created remarkable new images of the sunken SS Richard Montgomery – the munitions ship which lies just off the coast of Sheppey.

Taken after scans by the Maritime & Coastguard Agency, it reveals, in startling detail, the wreck of the ship which sank during the Second World War loaded with more than 1,400 tonnes of explosives.

It has been suggested that were the fragile cargo to be detonated it could generate a 1,000ft wide column of water and debris 10,000ft in the air, and generate a 16ft wave which would flood nearby areas.

The blast would also smash almost every window in nearby Sheerness and potential damage buildings.

Now the new images reveal the hull of the vessel snapped in half.

Attempts to salvage the explosives have been avoided in the past due to the expense involved. Now the fragili-

ty of the vessel and its load had meant an exclusion zone around the wreck.

It is not the first time the full state of the munitions ship has been seen in this terrible state, but this new shot shows off some new technology available to the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA).

It said: "This image of the SS Richard Montgomery is generated from multibeam sonar data of the wreck structure beneath the water and laser data for the wreck structure which is visible above the water.

"These two datasets are then merged to create geo-referenced, measurable 3D images of the wreck in its entirety. The MCA has used multibeam and laser technology to survey the SS Richard Montgomery for a number of years. With advances in technology and data processing software, data quality has improved and, as a result, we tend to see greater definition and detail in the images which allows us to get a better picture of the wreck and its current state."

The SS Richard Montgomery went aground on Sheerness Middle Sand in August 1944, broke in two and even-

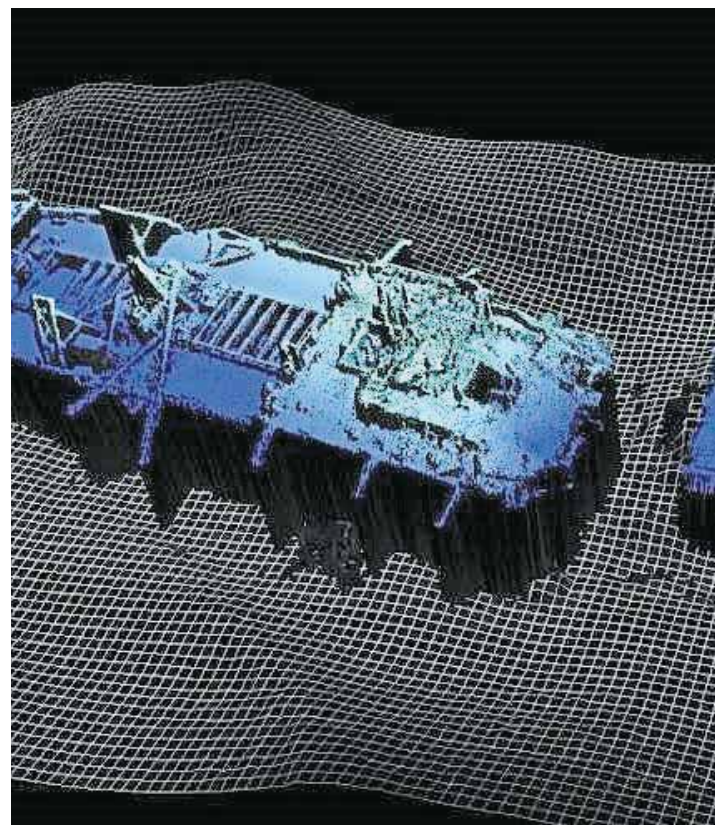
tually flooded completely and sank in September 1944. Although an operation to remove all the munitions on board began immediately, it was soon obvious that the wreck was too dangerous.

Since then, regular surveys have been carried out to assess the dangers.

The cargo makes for scary reading. It includes 1,407 TNT bombs weighing 500lbs each; another 800 TNT bombs weighing 1,000lbs and 1,500 weighing 250lbs. In all, it adds up to a ground shaking 1,400 tonnes.

But it is decaying in the sea water, and no one really knows if it poses any genuine danger at all, but officials have to err on the side of caution.

The coastguard agency said: "The work carried out on the wreck in 2013 and 2014 demonstrates that the wreck is slowly but continually deteriorating, as one might expect. Areas of deterioration are evident and eventual collapse is inevitable. However, across much of the wreck the 2013 and 2014 surveys showed little measurable change. The wreck still appears to be predominantly intact and



there is no evidence of any escape of cargo."

There remains an exclusion zone around the wreck under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973, and last year a pair of Kent surf boarders were warned when they 'sailed' right over

her – taking cheeky snaps of themselves as they did so.

The surveys and maintaining the exclusion zone presently costs the country around £40,000 a year.

In addition to this, the multibeam sonar surveys that produced this as-



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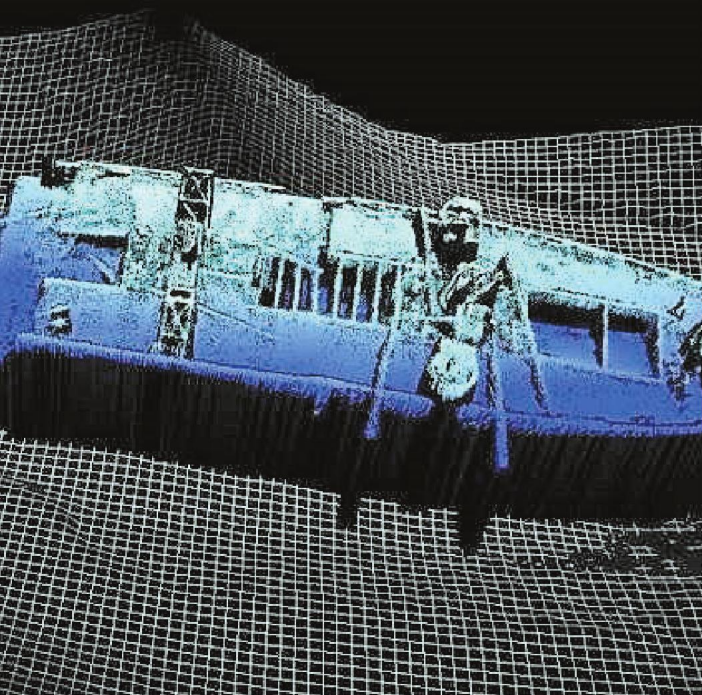
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SPLIT: New image from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency of the Second World War munitions ship

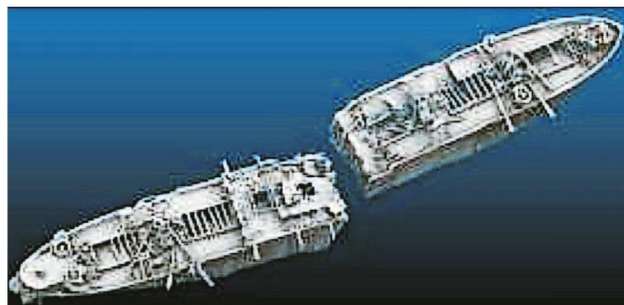


tonishing new picture, cost around £30,000.

The agency added: "The risks of explosion are thought to be small while the wreck is in a relatively stable condition. Whilst the risk of explosion is thought to be low, it is considered pru-

dent to take sensible steps to mitigate the risk.

"The advice we have received is that the best management for this wreck is one of monitoring with non-intervention. There are no current plans to move or remove the wreck."



PRESENCE: The masts of the ship can still be seen at low tide just off the coast of Sheerness. An exclusion zone surrounds its remains.

SHIP'S SHORT LIFE

LAUNCHED in the US in 1943, the SS Richard Montgomery was named after an Ulster soldier killed during the American Revolution.

Used to convey munitions between the US and Europe, it left Philadelphia on what would become her final voyage in August 1944, loaded with 6,127 tons of munitions.

She travelled from the Delaware River to the Thames Estuary, then anchored while awaiting the formation of a convoy to travel to Cherbourg, France, which had come under Allied control during the Battle of Normandy.

On August 20, 1944, she dragged her anchor and ran aground on a sandbank around 250 metres from the Medway Approach Channel, in a depth of 24 ft of water.

As the tide went down, the ship broke her back on sand banks near Sheppey.

The salvage operation began but was abandoned on September 25 before it could be completed as the ship began to break apart.

MP'S FEARS OVER POSSIBLE TERRORIST TARGET

LAST month, Sittingbourne and Sheppey MP Gordon Henderson raised the issue of the wreck in the House of Commons amid concerns it could become a terrorist target.

In response, Robert Goodwill, parliamentary under-secretary

at the Department for Transport, said: "Medway Port Authority, which guards the wreck under contract to the Maritime & Coastguard Agency, provides 24 hour surveillance of the wreck, both visually and by radar; patrols of the area around the wreck; and

an initial response to any potential incursions into the prohibited area. Incursions, and incidents likely to result in an incursion, are reported immediately to the police and to HM Coastguard so that appropriate specialist support can be provided."

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How legendary stone ended up in county field

For centuries the Stone of Scone has provided the seat for monarchs in England and Scotland. But in 1950 a large chunk of it found itself buried in the Kent countryside. **Chris Murphy** find out why



REPLICA: This is how the stone looks and is on display at Scone Palace in Scotland

IT has provided a seat for monarchs in England and Scotland throughout the centuries – but for a few days in 1950 the legendary Stone of Scone found itself buried in a field in Kent.

So just how did such an acclaimed relic end up in such an undignified shallow grave

The stone itself – an oblong block of red sandstone – is unremarkable to look out; yet it has been an ever present at coronations of kings and queens since the 14th century.

The last time it was used was for the Westminster Abbey coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953.

Also known by the names of the

Stone of Destiny or the Coronation Stone, it was originally kept at a monastery a few miles north of Perth, in Scotland, and was, according to English 14th century cleric and historian Walter Hemingford, “a large stone, hollowed out as a round a chair on which their kings were placed for their ordination”.

But in 1296, King Edward I removed the stone and fitted it to his own chair at Westminster Abbey, during the Scottish War of Independence. There remains some doubt as to whether the monks had actually hidden the real stone elsewhere, but, regardless, the current stone is believed to be that taken by Edward.

As it was in Scotland, the stone was then used by English monarchs to receive their crown.

It has always been viewed as a symbol of Scottish nationhood, and Edward I used this to declare himself King of the Scots.

Because of this importance, Scots have long felt the stone should naturally be returned to Scotland, but the English have resisted this for centuries.

Which brings us to four University of Glasgow students who decided to do something about it on Christmas Day 1950 – a move so audacious it was made in to a movie in 2008 called the Stone of Destiny.

After a long period of plotting and

planning, Ian Hamilton, Gavin Vernon, Kay Matheson and Alan Stuart, launched their operation to steal it back from its resting place at the very heart of Westminster.

The students were members of the Scottish Covenant Association, a group that supported home rule for Scotland.

After one aborted attempt, the raid was eventually successful, although the hapless gang managed to snap the priceless unique stone in two during its removal.

As they fled, Hamilton and Stuart headed 20 miles or so to Kent with the larger part of the stone – the others immediately took the second half north.

In their book *Stone of Destiny: A*

Passenger's Guide, Ian Hamilton spoke about their time with the stone in Kent, a county they knew nothing about apart from hops growing here.

Passing a line of aircraft hangers, they manhandled it under a fence, down an embankment and gouged a hollow for it to lay covering it with earth and leaves.

The pair then drove to nearby Rochester, less than three miles and a five-minute drive from the hiding spot. As it was past midnight, all the pubs were closed, so they set off for Scotland.

And there the stone lay, undisturbed, for several days until the gang returned and reunited both parts in Glasgow. A stonemason united the



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HOME: Today the stone is kept under the tightest of security at Edinburgh Castle

two halves with a brass rod. Intriguingly, it also contains a piece of paper – the contents of which have remained a mystery ever since.

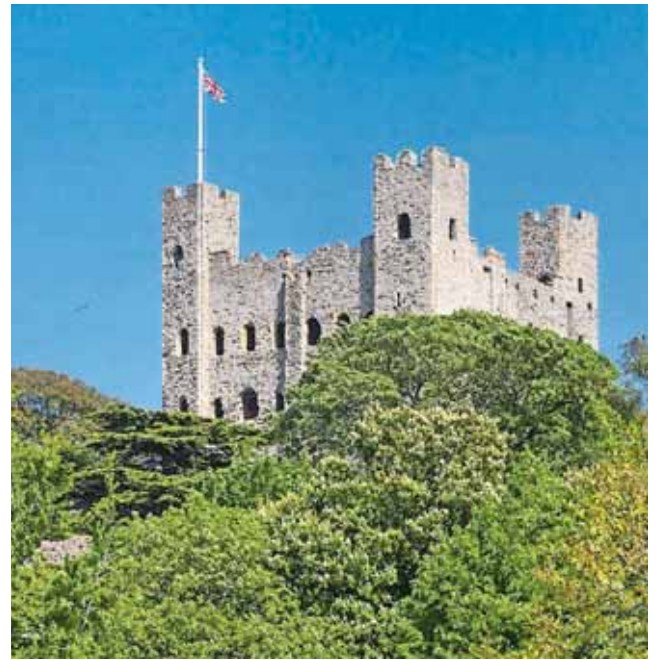
Just four months after it was stolen, the police received a tip-off and the stone was found at the high altar at Arbroath Abbey, where – in 1320 – the assertion of Scottish nationhood was made in the Declaration of Arbroath.

It was back in Westminster by the following February.

The four involved were all traced and three confessed. But fearing a political backlash to prosecutions, leading politician Sir Hartley Shawcross told Parliament: “The clandestine removal of the stone from Westminster Abbey, and the manifest disregard for the sanctity of the abbey, were vulgar acts of vandalism which have caused great distress and offence both in England and Scotland. I do not think, however, that the public interest required criminal proceedings to be taken.”

Stone expert Laura McCulloch who conducts tours of Scone Palace in Perth told us: “The idea of Scottish independence was gathering pace after the war and this theft brought the whole matter to the fore.

“It was a daring robbery and put Scotland at the top of the political agenda for a while. There was a growing movement to get a Scottish parliament and bringing the Stone of Scone back to Scotland made sure just about everyone knew about it.



HIDDEN: The student crooks hid part of the stone near Rochester

“But over the years, the story of the stone died down again. In 1996, it was brought back to Scotland once more. This time with the Queen’s permission and it is kept with the Scottish Crown Jewels at Edinburgh Castle.

“Many of the visitors there often wonder why there is a piece of stone sitting with all these valuable gems. It seems they often miss the story of the stone and its importance.

“It really is the symbol of Scotland and a vitally important part of our his-

tory. It should never have been removed by Edward. It is not back in its rightful place after all these centuries.

“We can only guess what might have happened if these students had not taken it. Perhaps it would still be sitting in Westminster. The people of Scotland should be proud of our heritage and be delighted it is back home.”

The stone will return to London for the next coronation, whenever that takes place, and then be returned to the castle immediately afterwards.

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Group calls for action now to tackle diabetes

The number of cases of the illness are on the rise across all parts of the county, prompting one group to demand the government take big steps now in order to stop people from dying younger

THE number of people living with diabetes in the UK has tipped over the four million mark for the first time, according to new figures released this week.

And there's been a steady climb across Kent in the number of those suffering from the illness, with rises in some areas of the county shooting up more than six per cent in the last three years.

The figures, extracted from GP patient data by the campaign group Diabetes UK, show there are now 4.05m people with the condition in the UK, which includes 3.5m adults who have been diagnosed, an increase of 119,965 compared with the previous year, and an increase of 65 per cent over the past decade.

There are also thought to be 549,000 people with undiagnosed Type 2 diabetes.

Diabetes is caused when the pancreas fails to generate sufficient insulin into the blood stream to break down sugar.

As a result, those who suffer from the life-long illness can suffer problems ranging from increased risk of strokes, blindness, kidney failure and amputations.

There are two forms of the illness – commonly referred to as type 1 and type 2. Type 1 is the more serious condition and sees the body pro-

duce no or very little insulin and it has to be controlled by taking regular insulin – often by injection – to keep blood sugar levels under control.

Type 2 is far more prevalent and while there are hereditary varieties of the illness, it is often caused by a sedentary lifestyle, poor diet and lack of exercise. And it is that form of the illness which is currently rising.

However, it can be controlled in many cases by lifestyle changes and medication.

The consequence is an NHS bill now in excess of £10 billion.

In the area covered by the Swale Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), the rise in prevalence between 2012-13 to 2014-15 increased by 6.02 per cent – the equivalent on 376 people.

The South Kent Coast CCG area rose by 5.34 per cent (431) and Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley by 4.59 per cent (828).

Nationally the rise is some six per cent.

Jill Steaton, Diabetes UK regional manager south east, said: "Over the past three years we have continued to see the number of people with diabetes in Kent rise at an alarming rate and these latest figures are a stark call and urgent call for action to tackle this serious health condition."

"Tragically, we are continuing to see too many people with diabetes suffering serious complications, and even dying before their time, and we know that key reasons for this are that they are being denied both the care and access to education that would help them to manage their condition well."

"It is vital that we start see people with diabetes receive good quality care wherever they live rather than them being at the mercy of a postcode lottery. Equally, diabetes education needs to be readily available everywhere, and commissioned along with a proper local system that explains to people with diabetes the benefits they will gain from attending an education course, and ensures that courses are well run."

"We also need a concerted effort led by the government to take active steps to address the fact that almost two in every three people in the UK are overweight or obese and are therefore at increased risk of type 2 diabetes. Basic measures such as making healthy food cheaper and more accessible, introducing clearer food labelling and making it easier for people to build physical activity into their daily lives would have a profound influence."

"With a record number of people living with diabetes, there is no time to waste in getting serious about providing better care and diabetes education. Until this happens, the rising number of people with diabetes will continue to be denied the best chance of living long and healthy lives and the NHS will continue to be crippled under avoidable but escalating costs of treating poorly managed diabetes."

Diabetes UK says diabetes education courses are not being commissioned for people in over a



BLOOD: Diabetes sees the body unable to generate sufficient insulin to allow it to break down sugars in the blood naturally.

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third of areas in England and that hospital care for people with the illness is "consistently poor".

When contacted by KoS, the East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust, the biggest in the county, which runs the William Harvey in Ashford, Kent and Canterbury and QEOM in Margate, declined to comment.

Chris Askew, chief executive of Diabetes UK, said: "With 4m people in the UK now living with diabetes, the need to tackle this serious health condition has never been so stark or so urgent."

In November, Medway became one of seven areas in the country starting a new programme designed to prevent people developing the disease.

The NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme in-

volves a specialist nurse auditing GP records, and contacting people at a high risk of contracting the disease.

Once identified as high-risk, people are invited to attend a free 12-week support group, called 'Let's Talk Weight'.

Specially trained staff will help advise people on diet and healthy living.

The programme was designed by NHS England, Public Health England and Diabetes UK using evidence of what works best to prevent the form of diabetes.

Aimed to reach 10,000 people during the trial period, the results will be examined when it concludes, with a view to it rolling out nationally.

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CAUGHT: University has caught more students cheating than any other British university, according to a report in a national newspaper

Uni says it has declared war on anyone trying to cheat system

Rising number of students using essay writing services to help get the grades needed to secure a pass

THE University of Kent says it has tough systems in place to crackdown on any student caught cheating in exams or course work, after it was discovered to have the highest number of people trying to trick their way to a better grade.

It comes after The Times newspaper published an article following a Freedom of Information request asking all Britain's universities for the number of students they had caught cheating.

Analysing the results, the paper found nearly 50,000 university students had been caught using underhand methods in the last three years.

Eleven institutions each caught 1,000 or more students over the period, with the University of Kent - which has its main campus in Canterbury - finding the most guilty at 1,947 - just 14 ahead of the next worst offender, the University of Westminster.

A spokesman for the University of Kent insisted strict monitoring of behaviour was already in place and that it was aware of the problem.

They added the high figures represent not only the university's tough monitoring which picks up any issues, but also covers everything from not referencing sources to actual cheating.

He said: "We have robust systems in place to detect anyone who may be trying to cheat. We will not tolerate academic misconduct.

"We take appropriate action against those who we find to be cheating and

continued infringement will result in expulsion from the university.

"Such actions are in the interests of all our students and ensures the protection of our academic integrity."

According to the survey, those from outside the EU are four times more likely to cheat in exams and coursework essays. Foreign non-EU students made up 35 per cent of all cases but accounted for just 12 per cent of the student population, requests from 70 universities showed.

Queen Mary University of London said 75 per cent of postgraduates found plagiarising were from abroad, including a third from China.

In all, 129 UK universities responded and revealed 362 students were dismissed because of cheating. That is one per cent of those found guilty of misconduct.

Five students were even caught arranging for someone else to sit their exams.

At Canterbury Christ Church University, between 2012 and 2015, there were 751 cases of students who were found to have cheated in coursework with plagiarism, and academic misconduct with their coursework. Of those, 23 students were acquitted and one more is pending. Between the same years, six cases of exam cheating were investigated but only one was deemed to have been provable.

A spokesman said it is drilled in to students that any form of cheating is simply not permissible, and it is a pointless exercise that teaches nothing.

They told us: "Students are made aware of the serious implications of



TOUGH: The number of foreign students attempting to dupe examiners and lecturers is disproportionately high

plagiarism and cheating. The university has effective systems in place to detect anyone who may be trying to cheat and will investigate all allegations robustly with any students suspected of plagiarism or cheating."

The University of Greenwich, which has a Medway campus, was sixth in the list.

Kay Thomson, the administration and finance officer at the university told us: "We believe that we may be more vigilant than other institutions in detecting plagiarism and other offences.

"Among other things, we use sophisticated computer software to detect matches between students' assignments and work that may have been previously submitted, or published, elsewhere.

"The penalties for academic mis-

conduct are also robust and can include exclusion from the university.

"Our standards and quality have been independently endorsed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education which confirmed, in spring this year, that they meet national standards."

The newspaper said the figures even include students trying to bribe lecturers.

Professional essay writers that tout their work on the internet are on the rise, according to one leading academic.

Professor Geoffrey Alderman, of the University of Buckingham, told the paper: "What I'd call type-1 plagiarism, copying and pasting, is on the wane because it's so easy to detect.

"But my impression is that type-2 cheating, using a bespoke essay-writing service, is increasing."

Such services can charge hundreds of pounds for essays, dissertations and model exam answers written by professional lecturers up to doctorate level.

Essay writing services are widespread. One claims: "Our service provides a full plagiarism scan showing that each essay is completely original, an in-depth quality report and access to our customer control panel where you can request any changes to your essay."

And it adds: "Our company provides assistance with over 8,000 essays every single year to students who are looking for help to obtain the best grade possible."

The five universities which caught the highest number of cheats were: Kent (1,947), Westminster (1,933), East London (1,828), Sheffield Hallam (1,740) and Oxford Brookes (1,711).



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Comic Clary's evolving career

From double entendres to make you blush on the alternative circuit to making the move into the mainstream, now 56, Julian Clary has made his home in Kent and is touring in 2016

NATIONAL trinket, author, TV and radio star and long-time Kent resident, Julian Clary, has a busy 2016 in store.

He hits the road for a string of live dates with shows in Canterbury and Tunbridge Wells in April, while the Aldington resident is also unleashing the second instalment of his children's books - *The Bolds*.

In a special Q&A he reflects on life in the county and his remarkable career.

Q Your personal life seems to have changed as much as your career - you've turned your back on partying and now live an idyllic rural lifestyle in a village in Kent?

A Yes. Well that's what I'm telling you anyway. I think there's nothing drearier than a 56-year-old homosexual hanging around Soho in lycra. Mercifully, one grows out of that. Thank goodness.

Q You don't miss those days, at all?

A Absolutely not. You'd have to pay a lot of money to get me into a nightclub, sniffing and snorting and dragging some trollop home with me. Yuck. I like to keep myself nice these days.

Q Are you well known in your village?

A Well, who knows? Most people here have got better things to do than get excited about celebrities in their midst. Mind you, I was in the front garden recently and a woman drove past with a friend and then I heard her car screech to a halt. And I heard her say, 'There he is, look, there he is'. Then she shouted out to me, 'Where's the other one?', meaning Paul O'Grady, who lives in the same village.

Q What would be the best way to approach you, if somebody wanted to come and ask for an autograph?

A Send a stamped addressed envelope to my agent. I jest. As long as I'm in a good mood I'll oblige. Autographs, selfies, a sample of my DNA, you only have to ask.

Q Why have you named your tour, *The Joy of Mincing*?

A I always like to get 'mincing' into the title. We've had *Lord of the Mince*; *Natural Born Mincer*; and *Mincing Machine* was my first tour in 1989.

I don't know why; it sets the tone, doesn't it? I suppose mincing, apart from being a means of walking around, is a way of life. The Joy of

Mincing is a declaration of the joy of life despite disapproval, perhaps.

Q Do you still feel people disapprove?

A Well, exactly. I think there probably is some [disapproval]. And mincing, which is an old fashioned word, was probably in its day borne out of standing up in the face of that disapproval.

Q Is the show as rude as ever - you haven't toned things down?

A No, I don't think so. It's the one time you can let rip a bit, on stage. I don't want to be filthy for the sake of it, but I think it's a comic device. You just exaggerate who you really are on stage. I'm quite fond of moments of vulgarity.

Q You've been performing for 30 years. How has comedy changed during that time?

A Yes, it's my 30th anniversary in 2016. It's changed beyond all recognition. It used to be an eclectic selection of people in small rooms above pubs, in the 1980s. Our comedy was a reaction against the right-wing men in bow-ties who were being offered as light entertainment in those days.

Q And has your comedy changed?

A Yes, a bit. I think you evolve, whether you want to or not. There was a certain amount of anger and delight in confronting people when I started, which has more or less gone now. Making people laugh is my main aim in life these days. I don't think there's so much to be angry about now.

Q Do you have fans who have been following your career for that full 30 years?

A There are, and they bring their children along now. I'm very fond of them, you know. You don't know their names necessarily, but it's always a joy to see a familiar face. There's a delightful family from Tunbridge Wells I've known since the boy was 13 and now he's a grown-up. It's charming. We talk about the old days at the Hackney Empire, or our aches and pains. There's a connection there, even though we don't really know each other, because on one level we do.

Q What sort of stories will you be telling on this tour?

A Well, there's a rather long story about how I once saved Joan Collins's life in a swimming pool in St Tropez. It's a true story, which I won't give away now, but it's a long, meandering tale that fills the first half. Then the second half is about MBEs. I've noticed a lot of my friends in the business are getting these awards. They're handing them out like Smarties. I think, 'Ooh, I'd like one of those', but it's never happened so I'm obviously not favoured by the Establishment. I can

CONTENT: Star in the garden of his home in Aldington



only blame myself...

So during the show, I give myself one and call it 'Mincer of the British Empire'.

I'm making lots of these MBEs and handing them out to people in the audience. Just the lucky few, you understand; it's not included in the ticket price.

I'm always looking for an excuse to talk to the audience. That's what keeps me going. You can get bored if you're just reeling off the same old nonsense.

I'm always very interested in the audience and their stories. People are very funny; they never fail to amuse.

Q I assume that if you were offered an MBE in real life, you would accept?

A I'd bite their hands off! I think I've been too rude about the royal family over the years, unfortunately. I'm probably on some kind of black list somewhere.

Q What do you think of Kate Middleton, the new one?

A Well, she's very fertile, isn't she? What more can one say? She's got lovely hair.

Q Do you find it difficult being on tour? Other comedians complain that it is lonely and that you eat badly because you're constantly on the road.

A Well, nobody's making you do it. And there's a Waitrose in every town these days.

It's probably just the dreary, married heterosexual types that complain. This is what I wanted to do 30 years ago, and I'm still doing it - standing on stage, talking about myself and getting applause for it. What's not to like?

I suppose it's a bit weird coming off stage and being on your own, but it doesn't bother me.

The Joy of Mincing is Julian Clary's celebration of 30 years as a camp comedian, touring nationwide in spring 2016. He performs at the Assembly Hall Theatre in Tunbridge Wells on April 22 and the Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury on April 24. His second children's book *The Bolds to the Rescue* (Andersen Press, RRP £6.99) is released on March 3.





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COMIC: Ed Byrne will perform in Tunbridge Wells.

Picture by: Roslyn Gaunt.

Ed Byrne will take to stage at Assembly Hall Theatre

The comedian will delve into issues such as feminism and family in the show

APPEARING as a regular guest on comedy shows such as *Mock The Week*, *Never Mind The Buzzcocks* and *Have I Got News For You*, Ed Byrne is well-known for his ability to make people laugh.

And the Irish comedian will be bringing his new stand-up show – *Outside, Looking In*, to Tunbridge Wells in March.

His comedy career has spanned two decades, and his new show covers a variety of topics – including a recent gastric illness, political party Ukip and feminism.

He will also be talking about his family, leading to the belief that *Outside, Looking In* will be the comic's most personal show to date.

"I didn't make a conscious effort to write a more personal show, but that was what was coming out

when I started writing it," he said.

"People come to see me for a laugh and I would like to think they go away thinking the show is quite heartwarming.

"A lot of comics may talk about the same stuff, but what makes it mine is that what I'm saying is what I genuinely think on this subject, and I try to make it as funny as I can. I think we all mine our lives to some degree or other."

Mr Byrne insists that he will be keeping his two young sons out of the limelight.

He reportedly shows the audience a photograph of one of his children during the show – forming part of a tale about the purchase of some new shoes – but says that he will be careful as they get older.

"I'm aware that they haven't given me permission to talk about them and that there will come a

point when I can't," he explains.

"John Bishop, for example, has stopped talking about his – much older – children on stage because people know who they are.

"I talk about them in pretty abstract terms, because what I'm discussing is the act of parenting, and you can't talk about that without mentioning your own children.

"And there isn't anything in this show that would make them at a later date say, 'I don't like this'."

The feminist slant to the show was sparked by Mr Byrne's reflections on his early days in comedy and he admits being uncomfortable about some of his material then.

"My comedy reflected my life at that time – single and enjoying myself – and most of it was fairly harmless 'the difference between men and women' kind of thing.

"But some of the stuff about an

ex-girlfriend I can see was a bit angry and I wouldn't do it now," he said.

So does he still enjoy stand-up comedy after 20 years?

"Apart from the travel involved, which no comic likes, I love it, because you have people responding to something that you have written alone in your office, and the work comes alive in a room of people.

"I like the television things I do, but nothing can beat a live comedy audience."

Mr Byrne will be performing at the Assembly Hall Theatre on March 6.

The performance starts at 8pm and tickets to the show are £19.

For more information about the performance or to book you can visit www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk or call the box office on 01892 530613.

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A tale of shocking revelations that shake foundation of family

by Molly Kersey-Law

molly.kersy-law@archant.co.uk

THE National Theatre's multi award-winning production of J B Priestley's classic play, *An Inspector Calls*, will be performed in Canterbury later this month.

The production, which has received 19 international awards, was written at the end of the Second World War, and set before the First World War.

It premiered in 1945.

The play tells the story of the mysterious Inspector Goole, who unexpectedly calls at the home of the prosperous Birling family.

Their peaceful dinner party takes a dark turn as Inspector Goole investigates the death of a young woman, shaking the foundation of their lives.

It is revealed that each member of the family has exploited the young woman in some way and his shocking revelations challenge all of the characters – as well as the audience – to examine their consciences.

The play is directed by Stephen Daldry, the Oscar nominated di-



REVELATIONS: Inspector Goole reveals how the Birling family wronged a young woman

rector of West End productions Billy Elliot The Musical and a revival of David Hare's production *Skylight* – starring Bill Nighy and Carey Mulligan.

He also received Academy Award nominations for his films *The Reader*, *The Hours*, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* and *Billy Elliot*.

Mr Daldry's production has combined the 1912 setting with

the time that *An Inspector Calls* was written – 1945.

The setting is aiming to portray a 'dramatic, war-torn wasteland', with the Edwardian Birling family home looming precariously on some stilts.

Mr Daldry's revival of the play opened at the National Theatre in 1992, receiving critical acclaim and receiving a number of awards including the Olivier Award for

best revival, best director and best designer

An Inspector Calls will be performed at the Marlowe Theatre from January 19 to 23.

Performances will be taking place at 2.30pm and 7.30pm, and tickets range from £18 to £33.50.

For more information, or to book, you can visit www.marlowetheatre.com or call the box office on 01227 787787.

Jools Holland in Margate

MUSICIAN Jools Holland will be performing at Margate Winter Gardens with his Rhythm and Blues Orchestra on April 29 at 7.30pm.

To book, visit www.mar-gatewintergardens.co.uk.



The Witches Of Eastwick

SHOW *The Witches of Eastwick* will be performed in Maidstone from March 15 to 19.

Performances will be taking place at 2.30pm and 7.30pm.

Tickets to the show are £15.

To book you can visit www.parkwoodtheatres.co.uk.

Singing along to Frozen

A SING-A-Long-A-Frozen event will be taking place at the Churchill Theatre, Bromley, on March 20 at 3.30pm.

Tickets are £15.90.

To book, visit www.atgtickets.com/bromley.



Magician at Leas Cliff Hall

MAGICIAN Jamie Raven will be performing at the Leas Cliff Hall, Folkestone, on July 1.

Mr Raven impressed judges on ITV show *Britain's Got Talent*, making his way through to the final.

The performance starts at 7.30pm.

Visit www.atgtickets.com/folkestone to book.



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Bobby Davro to perform

COMEDIAN, impressionist and actor Bobby Davro will be performing at the Leas Cliff Hall, Folkestone, on May 18. The show starts at 7.30pm. For tickets, visit www.atgtickets.com/folkestone.



Tale of Gangsta Granny

DAVID Walliams' Gangsta Granny will be performed at the Churchill Theatre, Bromley, from July 20 to 24.

The show is based on Mr Walliams' book and staged by the Birmingham Stage Company - the producers of Horrible Histories.

Visit www.atgtickets.com/bromley to book.

Story of the Snow Queen

DANCERS from Ballet Theatre UK will perform The Snow Queen at the Theatre Royal Margate on January 24 at 3pm.

Tickets are £16 or £14 with concessions.

To book, call 01843 292795.



The musical tale of Annie

MUSICAL Annie will be performed on stage at the Orchard Theatre, Dartford, from January 25 to 30.

The show features songs Hard Knock Life, Easy Street and Tomorrow.

Performances are at 2.30pm and 7.30pm. Visit www.orchardtheatre.co.uk to book.

Popular Hetty Feather book blows on to stage

By Molly Kersey-Law

molly.kersey-law@archant.co.uk

THE work of well-known children's author Jacqueline Wilson will be brought to life on stage in Dartford.

Featuring circus skills, aerial artistry and original songs, Hetty Feather tells the story of a young girl who grows up in the Foundling Hospital after being abandoned there as a baby.

The show charts her adventures - which include spending a night alone locked in an attic, braving the frightening streets of Victorian London and discovering the squirrel house and Tanglefields Travelling Circus.

Speaking about her inspiration for writing the book, Ms Wilson explained: "I became involved with the Foundling Museum in London and the director asked me if I'd like to write a story about a foundling child. I thought this was a brilliant idea."

As well as being made into a stage production, the book has also been adapted into a CBBC series - with scenes filmed at Cobham House in Gravesend.



"I never dreamt that Hetty would be a big success," Ms Wilson added.

"I just knew I had to write her story. I don't think I've ever enjoyed writing a novel so much."

"I didn't even think about the possibility of adaptations. The stage version of Hetty is quite magical - and I'm loving watching the television series too."

And Ms Wilson said that the circus and aerial skills involved in the performance made it interesting for audiences to watch.

"I think it makes the stage show particularly exciting, with a whole new dimension. The first time I saw the show I was totally blown away," she said.

Phoebe Thomas will be taking on the role of Hetty Feather.

The show is directed by Sally Cookson, with original songs and music by Benji Bower.

Hetty Feather will be performed at the Orchard Theatre from March 23 to 27.

To book, visit www.orchardtheatre.co.uk or call 01322 220000.



ADVENTURES: Phoebe Thomas plays the role of Hetty Feather



SKILLS: Circus skills and aerial artistry will feature in the show

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'Going solo feels like having an affair' to Garvey

The lead singer of band Elbow, Guy Garvey, has released a solo album called *Courting The Squall*

It would be easy to think that Elbow's winning formula is all down to the band's affable frontman Guy Garvey - but that would be doing the Manchester five-piece a huge disservice.

With his BBC Radio 6 Music show and public profile, he may be the face of the outfit as well as the voice, but the band is a democracy, with every musical move they've made over their six-album career a joint decision.

For proof of that, you only need to listen to Garvey's recent solo album, *Courting The Squall*. It of course sounds vaguely similar to an Elbow record; his rich, warm hug of a voice unmistakable, as well as some delightful rhyming couplets and sentiments that seem so perfect, you can't

believe someone hasn't thought of it before. Musically, however, it covers a much more diverse range of styles and influences, tipping its hat in the direction of folk, funk, jazz and American roots.

His radio show - Guy Garvey's Finest Hour - involves Garvey playing a wide selection of music his listeners might like, while weekly feature, *A Song For Guy*, sees listeners returning the favour, suggesting a song for him they think he'll never have heard before. The result is exposure to all sorts of wonderful music from around the world.

As for branching out on his own - the solo excursion is a temporary one, with Elbow due back in the studio next year for album number seven -



SOLO: Guy Garvey has released album *Courting The Squall*

he says it feels like having an affair.

He's been working at the same studio in Manchester where Elbow have settled, and recalls bandmate Craig Potter, who was working in the next room on a project with another artist, popping in to say hello while he was rehearsing recently.

"He said it was like catching me in bed with another woman," reveals Garvey. "Although he was finding plectrums about the place, rather than rogue earrings. But it's just good fun, and I can't wait to see Elbow in the crowd at my gigs. That's going to be a treat of the age for me."

Normally when the singer of a band goes it alone, it's because there's some underlying tension causing the move, or it's a signal of more perma-

nent things to come. Garvey insists that's not the case for him, and it's very easy to believe that.

When the band heard his album had gone to number three in the charts, he said within 30 seconds, he'd received congratulatory texts from the other four wishing him well.

He's wanted to make this solo album for some time, although admits he's only been able to release it because of Elbow's success, allowing him the indulgence. He wasn't going to tour the album, either, until bandmate Pete Turner persuaded him to.

"I can't wait to take it on the road and see people's faces in the crowd again," he said.

Courting The Squall is out now. Visit www.guygarvey.com/live.

A musical family show

FAMILY show Flyaway Katie will be performed in Folkestone later this month.

The show is based on the children's book by Polly Dunbar, with music provided by Tom Gray of indie rock band Gomez.

It will be performed at the Folkestone Quarterhouse on January 30 at 2.30pm.

For more information, or to book tickets, you can visit www.quarterhouse.co.uk.

Swan Lake performed

THE Vienna Festival Ballet will perform the well-known tragic love story *Swan Lake* in Gravesend.

The production features Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's musical score.

It will be performed at the Woodville on March 24 at 7.30pm.

Tickets range from £15 to £21.

For further details, or to book tickets, visit www.woodville.co.uk.

Stand up show on age

COMEDIAN, actor and author Russell Kane will be bringing his new stand-up show - *Right Man, Wrong Age* - to the Central Theatre, Chatham, in April.

He will be talking about how nobody ever feels they are the 'right' age, but how this is normal.

The show will take place on April 2 at 8pm.

Tickets are £16 and can be booked by visiting www.medway.gov.uk.

Derren Brown in town

MULTI award-winner Derren Brown will be taking to the stage in Canterbury next month.

Mr Brown, who specialises in psychological illusion, will be performing his new show, *Miracle*, at the Marlowe Theatre from February 8 to 13.

Performances start at 7.30pm.

For more details, or to book tickets, visit www.marlowetheatre.com.

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The top gadgets to buy this year

A NUMBER of industry experts have predicted the kind of gadgets which will be popular this year. Pastel coloured items and gadgets that help speed up household tasks and aid performance tracking are all expected to be a big hit this year.

If you're planning on splashing out on a new gadget, the guide includes information on products that are available to buy.

Here's what made the list:

Alex Gort-Barten, director, Dualit

"No one could ignore the trend for metallics throughout 2015 - with copper and brass adorning furniture,



lighting, appliances and even gadgets. Metallics have staying power, making them a firm investment. I expect 2016 will see pastels come to the fore in a big way, adding a softness to what has previously been quite a stark and edgy interiors look. Think pistachios, pale pinks and creamy blues for all aspects of the home - from soft furnishings to kettles and toasters."

■ The Dualit classic four slice toaster in petal pink is £189.95 (£20 of each sale of this colour goes to The Haven breast cancer support centres) and available from www.dualit.com.

Michelle de Boer, trade marketing and product manager, Braun

"With time in the home becoming ever more limited, people are increasingly looking for easy to use gadgets which help to speed up household tasks. We expect the trend for time-saving gadgets to continue into 2016, as people look to alleviate some of the time and hard work



they put into doing the household duties."

■ The Braun CareStyle 5 ironing system IS 5043 £229.98. Visit www.braunhousehold.co.uk.

Clare Slater, trade marketing manager, Kenwood

"As the average time spent preparing meals has reduced from one hour in 1980 to just 34 minutes in today's fast-paced society, demand for products that make feeding a family with healthy, home-made meals quickly and easily has increased, and this is a trend that is set to continue into 2016."

■ The Kenwood KCook is £329.99. Visit www.kenwoodworld.co.uk.

Jonathan Marsh, buying director electricals and home technology, John Lewis

"Performance tracking led the way in 2015 with a 52 per cent growth and, more specifically, FitBit activity trackers grew 241 pc. Similarly, the Apple Watch, which we introduced in 2015, has been a huge success and significantly exceeded expectations. Connected home has also been a sig-

nificant area of growth for us as a retailer and we predict this will be a standout category in 2016. Among the hustle and bustle of everyday life, customers increasingly want to be able to control their gadgets from their smartphone. Next year will also see the launch of a new smart fridge which, thanks to built-in WiFi, will enable customers to order their groceries direct from the device."

■ The Vector Luna brushed stainless steel case and padded leather strap smartwatch is £249. Visit www.johnlewis.com.

Phil Samuels, category director, computing, Currys PC World

"After showing some life this year, smart watches are set to boom in 2016, as Apple and Samsung battle over who has the best software, design and the all-important payment service; in 2016 we'll all be using our smart watches to pay for our next coffee or see when someone has called or texted us. Virtual reality is coming to our home computers in 2016; the year

we'll see the likes of HTC's Vive and Oculus Rift reach consumers with truly immersive virtual reality experiences - better than 3D has ever been, and the beginning of what feels like a revolution in the way we consume content over the next decade."

■ The Apple Watch 38mm sports band in stainless steel and white is £409. Visit www.currys.co.uk.

Nick Grocott, head of marketing EMEA, House of Marley

"2015 has seen a massive surge in wireless headphones, a trend we believe will continue to grow in 2016, with more and more audio brands providing Bluetooth compatibilities for consumers who want to take their music wherever they go. Another trend we believe will have a big impact in 2016 is the rise in high fashion headphones, with numerous audio brands releasing rose gold headphones this year."

■ The House of Marley positive vibrations headphones are £49.99 and available from www.houseofmarley.co.uk.



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The entertainment in store for 2016

THROUGHOUT the year, spread across the county, offering a range of entertainment to enjoy over the course of the year. Shows that have been performed in the West End will be making their way to theatres in the county, as well as comedians who have been stars of the screen taking to the stage to perform.

Here are just some of the events that are in store over the coming months:

COMEDY

Comedy entertainer Brian Conley is bringing his new show to Margate in March.

The show - Alive and Dangerous - features a mixture of Mr Conley's brand new comedy material and his well-known work from the stage and screen.

Mr Conley's TV career has spanned four decades - with ITV's The Brian Conley Show becoming a prime Saturday evening attraction.

He will be on stage at the Margate Winter Gardens on March 13 at 8pm.

The venue's entertainment manager, Paul Palmer, said: "We've had a huge success with stand-up comedians at the Winter Gardens and Theatre Royal but Brian Conley is a one-man variety show.

"We are continually working on

bringing the best comedy talent to Margate, we have some great additions to the shows we have already confirmed that we can't wait to reveal."

■ To book visit www.margatewintergardens.co.uk.

MUSICAL

Award-winning show American Idiot will be performed in Bromley as part of its tour of the UK.

The musical features hits of the punk rock band Green Day including Holiday, Wake Me Up When September Ends and Boulevard Of Broken Dreams.

It tells the story of three boyhood friends who are searching for meaning in a post 9-11 world.

Singer Amelia Lily will be reprising her critically-acclaimed role as Whatsername during the tour.

She said: "I'm so excited to be part of American Idiot on tour. "It's been an amazing experience playing Whatsername in the West End and now I get to do it all over again."

The show premiered in 2009 and has since been performed on Broadway and London's West End.

It will be at the Churchill Theatre from March 20 to April 2.

■ To book visit www.atgtickets.com/bromley.



VARIETY: A number of different shows will be performed around Kent

THEATRE

The 39 Steps will be performed in Dartford as part of its 10th anniversary tour.

The long-running West End show will be performed at the Orchard Theatre from February 1 to 6.

The production, which was adapted for the stage by Patrick Barlow, is based on a 1914 spy thriller written by John Buchan.

It was also adapted for the screen by Alfred Hitchcock in 1935.

It tells the story of a charming hero named Richard Hannay, who becomes involved in a dangerous cat and mouse game which stretches

from London to the Scottish Highlands.

The show features four actors who will play more than 130 different characters in 100 minutes - Richard Ede, Olivia Greene, Andrew Hodges and Rob Witcomb.

■ To book visit www.orchardtheatre.co.uk.

ONE FOR THE FAMILY

Suitable for children between three and eight, an adaptation of Aesop's much-loved fable The Town Mouse And The Country Mouse will be performed at the Folkestone Quarterhouse.

The show has been adapted and created by The Pied Piper theatre company, and tells the story of two mice who discover that change can sometimes be exciting and that friendship is the most important thing of all.

The production features original music and songs.

It will be taking place on January 16 at 2.30pm, and lasts for 50 minutes.

Tickets are £6 for adults, £5 for children or £20 for two adults and two children.

■ To book visit www.quarterhouse.co.uk.

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Taking positive steps towards a happy

THE last few years have seen some major trends emerge in the world of fitness - not least the fact that, generally speaking, we're getting more and more into it.

What's it doing for us? How can we improve - and is there a gadget that'll help us record that improvement? Will it make us stronger, but also more calm, happy and motivated?

We don't just want to participate - we want to read about our chosen disciplines, buy the gear, and share and compare on social media too.

Having a keen interest in fitness is nothing new. What is new is how enscenced it's become in the mainstream.

You no longer have to work in the industry, or be pro or semi-pro, to

want to take your exercise seriously and seek to understand its mechanics; everybody can - and you no longer have to subscribe to specialist magazines to read about it; it's right there in the features pages of the weekend papers.

Here's a quick look at how some key trends are forecasted to develop over the year:

MIND IS THE MATTER

While there's still a way to go with mental health awareness, we are talking about mental health more now than in previous decades - and we're increasingly aware that looking after ourselves is as much about managing stress and keeping our minds healthy as it is about getting our all-important five-a-day and not smoking.

Much research has found that exercise can have similar - and indeed sometimes even more effective - results than antidepressant drugs, including a Harvard review of studies dating back to 1981 which concluded that regular exercise can improve mood in those with mild to moderate depression, and also play a role in the

treatment of major clinical depression.

Many people who see exercise as a crucial part of their lives cite 'stress-relief' as one of its key benefits. Getting our heart rates up and flooding our veins with oxygen triggers chemical reactions that offset the strain and exhaustion of our demanding worlds, not only helping us feel more in control and grounded, but also serving as a reminder that there's more to life.

"Over the last year, we've seen an increasingly conscious approach to exercise develop, as our knowledge of our body grows. 2016 will take this further, as it becomes not just about the body but the mind," says James Trevor, product innovation manager at Virgin Active.

"This consciousness will continue to develop further as we increasingly link the way we exercise and the positive effect it has on our mind, utilising it to raise endorphins and help us find a balance in our busy day-to-day lives."

CHASING ZEN

As well as being a general factor across all exercise disciplines, 'mindful fitness' is growing in more targeted ways too, specifically with the continually growing popularity of the likes of yoga, Pilates and Tai

Chi-type classes, where calm, focus and deep breathing play central roles, and for many people are the number one appeal of participating.

"Yoga has become a perennial player in the trend lists and its massive range of different style, alongside its continuous results in participants means it is staying in the top list and going nowhere," says celebrity trainer Matt Roberts, whose clients include David Cameron.

CHALLENGING TIMES

Alongside this, our thirst for adrenalin and escapism through exercise also looks like it knows no bounds, as more and more of us sign up to personal challenges. Goalposts are forever being stretched as well - these days, as well as knowing somebody training for their first marathon, there's a high chance somebody among your friends, acquaintances or colleagues will be ticking off an ultra, too.

"Life is about testing yourself and pushing your own limits," says Kenton Cool, who climbed Everest for the 11th time in 2013.

"We are starting to see this challenge mentality become part of our approach to exercise, how much we actually know our own bodies and how far can we push ourselves."

ADVENTURE: Levison Wood thinks that 'adventure is catching on'.



It's not just about achieving ever-more challenging targets though; the escapism plays a key part too, wanting to be more well-rounded people with multiple interests and skills, whose lives and identities no longer revolve so disproportionately around work and income.

"Adventure is catching on. In 2016, we think more people are going to be trying new things, whether that's



CHALLENGE: Kenton Cool says a challenge is becoming part of our approach to exercise

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taking on a challenge like Tough Mudder, learning to ski, or something life-changing like walking the Nile," says explorer Levison Wood.

SHOW ME THE RESULTS

Just like people, lifestyle trends can be full of contradictions, and as our appetite for mindfulness and a return to simpler joys grows, so too does our taste for fast results, and the tech to

measure them with.

A big example of this is the relatively recent trend for high-intensity interval training [HIIT], something that's now incorporated across countless workout classes and disciplines, with short super high-intensity bursts interspersed with short recovery periods.

These workouts tend to be fast, and promise fast results too, which, in research trials at least, also deliver.

"[HIIT] has stayed popular because those people who are into their training like the hard, high-intensity, barrier-pushing appeal, while for those who are less exercise-inclined, it offers a solution that doesn't eat up too much time but does produce good results," says Mr Roberts.

"There will always be concerns about the safety of true high-intensity training for certain individuals but, as always, provided the individual is generally in good health then the approach is fantastic for many different goals and outcomes."

Scott MacKenzie, UK group exercise manager for Fitness First, notes that gym-goers are continually looking to "ramp up the intensity of their workouts". Furthermore, the EPOC [Excess post-exercise oxygen consumption] effect associated with this style of training means you continue

to burn calories much quicker, up to 48 hours after the workout, he adds.

Our results-driven thinking is also reflected in the ongoing trend for wearable tech, apps and activity tracking gadgets like Fitbits and Jawbone. While in terms of research, the jury's out on the true extent of their long-term effectiveness, and if you do some digging, you'll find there's some mixed evidence as to whether more expensive gadgets actually garner 'better' results for users, the trend for 'smart training' is still gathering pace.

"This has been gradually growing for around the last five years. It takes a while for any technology to become normal and accepted... but look around you now," says Mr Roberts.

"There are devices to wear on your wrist, chest and head to track your body; devices built into golf clubs, tennis rackets, bicycles and footballs that track all sorts of sports data, and there are, of course, multiple sensors built into your phone that you carry around with you every minute of every day, collecting data whether you asked for it or not.

"The difference now is that there are great apps that are delivering the information back in a clear, acceptable and simple enough way to make it interesting and useful."



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Marion Hoyle 48yrs

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Book offers advice for healthy meals

If learning to cook healthy, wholesome meals is number one on your New Year's resolutions list, then help is at hand in the form of Donna Hay – Australia's answer to Delia Smith.

Ms Hay, whose bestselling cookbooks are famously filled with crisp, mouth-watering images, has just published *The New Easy*, which comes with the promise of "simple meal ideas that are big on flavour but low on fuss".

The mum-of-two has managed to incorporate "all the superfood ingredients" – like quinoa, chia seeds and kale – into her recipes, which are split into 'weeknights' and 'weekends', so they're perfect for those who are hoping to get back on the low-calorie wagon after indulging at Christmas.

"Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without a bit of overindulging, so there's no need to beat yourself up about it," says 45-year-old Ms Hay, who lost three dress sizes by switching to healthy eating and an exercise regime that includes running and stand-up paddle boarding.

"I'm all about balance though – I know that if I've enjoyed quite a lot of great food and drink over the festive period, then I need to balance it out a bit in the New Year, with a few extra kilometres on my run or a few more salads and meat-free days.

"I don't believe in extreme diets or

cutting things out completely – just simply enjoying a great range of food that's fresh, light and packed with vegetables and nutritious foods."

As a busy working mum, Ms Hay knows how tough it can be to cook from scratch during the week, so she's used "lots of great time-saving tricks" in the new cookbook.

"A lot of the sweets are made with a dough or batter you can make in a food processor, or cakes you can make using a simple batter in just one bowl," she says.

"My food-processor carrot cake has become one of my go-to desserts.

"In my recipes for weeknights and casual weekends, I've used clever store cupboard ingredients, like store-bought puff pastry to make gorgeous tomato tarts, or caramelised onion relish in a super-easy marinade for lamb.

"There are lots of easy pastas with new flavours and a delicious chicken curry that you can leave to bake in the oven – just really easy but delicious meals."

Ms Hay's foodie career began as a writer and food stylist when she was 19.

By 25, she'd become food editor for *Marie Claire*, and in 2001, she launched *Donna Hay* magazine. Another decade on and she'd landed her first TV series and launched a

cookware range, which she developed with Royal Doulton.

She's just opened a pop-up shop in Sydney selling her homewares, filming is under way for a new show, and she has plans for another cookbook later in 2016.

All these demands on her time have been the driving force "to create cookbooks and recipes that are more about spending time with your family and not your kitchen stove".

But exercise is also an extremely important element in her daily routine.

"No matter how busy I am, I always try to make sure I still find time for exercise. Most mornings or evenings I go for a run – it really helps me relax, de-stress and focus on the things I need," she says.

But when she has time, Ms Hay enjoys nothing better than cooking a relaxed meal for close friends at home, as long as it involves a little of her favourite guilty pleasure...

"I enjoy cooking their favourite dishes for them, and taking the time to all sit down together, preferably outdoors, to chat, share the meal and a few drinks. My perfect meal would usually also involve ice-cream in any form – it's like happiness in a bowl!"

■ **The New Easy is available to buy now and can be purchased from Amazon.**



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New gardening trends for the year



PLANTSMAN:
Andy McIndoe

AS we plan for new beds, borders, patio plantings and hard landscaping, it's a good time to find out what followers of fashion will be doing to their gardens in the New Year.

But does the average gardener really follow trends? Well, we no longer see the sky blue fences that once graced many a garden in the classic makeover show *Ground Force*, and the popularity in certain annual bedding plants has diminished in favour of more low-maintenance, permanent planting – but do true gardeners follow fashion?

"I think fashion in gardening is a fallacy because people will buy their favourites and it's wildly influenced by what's in production," says Andy McIndoe, plantsman, lecturer for www.my-garden-school.com, writer and blogger, who won 25 consecutive Gold Medals at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show as managing director of Hillier Nurseries.

However, certain trends will continue in the New Year because of people's awareness of the importance of protecting the planet.

"People are growing fewer bed-

ding plants and more and more seed-raised perennials, opting for varieties that are single flowered, naturalistic and attractive to bees and butterflies. Wildlife planting will continue to increase in popularity," he says.

The recent news that more than three-quarters of the UK's butterflies have declined in the last 40 years should only encourage this trend, with more people planting varieties including scabious, buddleia, Michaelmas daisies, thistles, wild rocket and catmint, along with other insect-attracting plants.

"All of the shaggy, natural-looking plants are popular, along with any of the single daisies such as *leucanthemum*. *Gaillardia* (a great nectar source) used to be a rather zinnia-like subject but it's still very popular," says Mr McIndoe.

"Anything to do with bees has become cult, which has had a huge influence on the garden chemical market. People are really wary of anything that isn't nature-friendly and organic."

People are not as enthusiastic about having immaculate lawns as they once were, Mr McIndoe observes.

"People aren't as fussy about

having a perfect green sward and unfortunately those that have small gardens and want a perfect lawn are increasingly using artificial grass, while others opt for alternative landscaping surfaces such as gravel or paving."

While the trend in 'grow your own' is ever popular, more gardeners are looking at ornamental vegetables that they can mix with flowers in beds and borders.

"The association with celebrity chefs such as Raymond Blanc and Jamie Oliver, who want their gardens to look good as well as produce great crops, has done well for the profile of mixing flowers and vegetables."

David Mitchell, plant buyer for Wyevale Garden Centres, predicts that peony roses, dicentra, ferns and grasses will be popular next year, along with impulse herbaceous perennials.

"Hot colours like *Papaver nudicaule* 'Spring Fever Red', *Dahlia* 'Fifteen Love' (deep orange-red flowers and dark foliage) and *Echinacea* 'Cheyenne Spirit' (mixed colours) should do well, as should dark colours like *Salvia* 'Amistad', 'Love and Wishes' and 'Joy'."

Mr McIndoe says: "Today you

are seeing a lot of lilac blue, rich purple and soft greens, in a trend which will continue through the year. You may get purples and blues in tulips in spring – it's not about yellow daffodils."

Time-strapped householders will continue to want low-maintenance plants, he continues.

"People want very simple, low-maintenance gardens and it will be a big challenge for the people designing them to come up with the goods because often they are not using enough good, basic, hard-working evergreen plants which actually are low-maintenance."

"It will be time to make good use of reliable stalwarts like *euonymus* and *Viburnum davidii*. They may be mistaken for boring, but people are really happy with the overall results once these plants are in the ground."

"The landscapers and designers need to work on their plant knowledge and specifically the right plant for the right situation rather than just following what the catwalk designers are using."

"Show gardens influence what people plant, but they represent a moment in time for a wow effect, not a long-term garden scheme."

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Making choices about what to study

WITH the dawn of a new year comes the need to start making choices with regards to education.

This year a number of children and young people will be finishing primary school and looking to move on to secondary school, or finishing their secondary school education and deciding what it is that they want to do next.

There are a number of ways to go about choosing a secondary school.

Some schools may be holding open days to explain what it is that they have to offer students.

There could also be an opportunity for parents and children to arrange appointments to look around the school and try and determine what they make of it.

Listening to what other parents and children have to say can be helpful too – is there a school that someone you know would really recommend?

Looking at league tables and Ofsted reports may give some indication of what the school is like, and it is worth thinking about areas that your child feels more confident in to find a school that is a good fit for them.

When you finish secondary school, there are a number of options that you can choose from.



EDUCATION: Students may choose to stay on for Sixth Form or go to college instead

Many schools in the county have a Year 12 or Sixth Form, offering A Levels to students.

If your school is one of these, then you could stay on for an additional two years in order to gain these

qualifications.

There could be real benefits to staying in a familiar environment in order to carry out further study – you will already know the layout of the school, as well as a number of the

teachers and other students.

You will have plenty of opportunities to talk to your teachers about the A Levels that are on offer, especially if they teach a subject you particularly enjoy and you want to continue

learning more about it.

However, some people will be hoping for a change after spending five years at the same school, and will be wanting to stretch their wings a little.



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New qualifications 2016



OPTIONS: East Kent College principal Graham Razey says it is important for young people to look at all the options



The important thing is to take the time to choose something that is right for you.

"It can be comfortable to take the first thing that's offered. All I would say to young people and their parents is look at all the options," said Graham Razey, principal of East Kent College.

"Don't take anyone else's view - go and look at the options for yourself, and I think you'll be surprised. That's across schools, colleges, private training providers. Take the time to go and look at what's available and then make your choice."

College offers an environment that is very different from school.

"Our courses are predominantly technical and industry based. They are career based," added Mr Razey.

"We offer apprenticeships in 25 different areas including engineering and health and social care.

"I think what college offers, which

is a unique selling point, is a real link to business. You get real experience of the work you have to do. You get to work on business-devised projects.

"It's the business setting your work opposed to it being lesson-run. For young people who know the industry they want to work in they will get a more specific, focused training.

"We don't want businesses to say to us - 'well you do the training and then we'll train them for our business'."

A number of training courses are also offered for those leaving school, or for those who are looking to change careers.

Many of these schemes will pay a wage while you are there, and take you towards employment.

Whatever qualifications you are looking to gain, there are a number of options for you.

Speak to a careers advisor in your local area to find out more.

If you are still keen to do A Levels, why not go to another school in order to do them and get a change of scenery?

It is worth researching other subjects that are offered at schools in your area, and having a look around

the schools to see what they are like.

A Level qualifications will help students get what they need in order to go to university. However, not everyone will want to pursue this route.

For people looking to move on from

a school environment, college could be a good choice, especially if you already know what career it is that you would like to go in to.

A number of colleges in Kent offer apprenticeships, allowing people to learn a trade.

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Falling in love with southeast Asia

TRAVEL REVIEW: Asia

by Abi Jackson

It takes mere seconds for the thick, gnarly clouds to tumble across the sky, smothering every inch of blue. The chalky red dirt track and flanking green paddy fields, which until moments ago had looked so vibrant they seemed unreal, are now bathed in an eerie gloom.

The rain follows with equally dramatic speed. I pedal on - until our guide Alistair yells: "Everybody stop here!" After a morning of long, remote stretches, the rain's struck at a convenient point: there's a building where we can shelter until it clears.

Huddled beneath a porch in rural Cambodia, we're a motley crew of 14 Brits shivering in sodden Lycra.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to rest. Five days into my eight-day ride with global cycling and trekking challenge specialists Discover Adventure, I've been having an uncomfortable morning. Despite the padded shorts and chamois cream, blisters have sprouted under my bum cheeks and my legs are close to seizing up.

Stiff and sore, I'm realising why the trip brochure warned this was going to feel like a challenge and may sometimes require us to 'dig deep'.

Our itinerary - starting in Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City and finishing in Cambodia's Angkor Wat - would take us on a 510km cycle ride over the course of eight days. The trip is manageable for people of moderate to decent fitness, though cycling experience massively helps. If you're not used to being on a saddle for hours, days on end, it's going to hurt, and training's firmly advised.

Throw 40-degree heat and hours under a blazing sun into the mix and it's largely pot luck how you'll fare.

Thankfully, by day three, every-



CYCLING: Completing the journey was a 'bittersweet victory'

body's feeling good. We're free to relax and embrace the experience, leaving 'real life' thousands of miles away.

Demand for adventure travel has boomed in recent years, with cycling trips becoming increasingly popular.

Discover Adventure has seen a notable increase in appetite for trips in southeast Asia. What's the appeal? A quick survey of our group sums it up.

Ranging in age from 22 to 67, we're a right mix. For some, fundraising for

charities close to their hearts is their main motivation, while for others, it's simply a passion for cycling, a desire to push their limits a little and see a bit of the world in the process.

The fact we're travelling in this part of the world gives our adventure an additional exotic twist - and cycling enables us to get up close and personal with the destination in a way that's not usually possible.

The itinerary includes gaps for

tourist stuff, including a morning boat ride through Vietnam's Can Tho floating market where fish, fruit and even livestock are all traded on the water; the Cu Chi Tunnels where the Vietcong hid during the Vietnam War; the Tuol Sleng Museum in Phnom Penh - a former school used as a secret prison camp by the Khmer Rouge during the Pol Pot regime in the late Seventies which saw around two million Cambodians killed; and

TRAVEL FACTS

Abi Jackson was a guest of Discover Adventure, who offer the 11-night Ho Chi Minh to Angkor Wat Cycle challenge from £1,899 including accommodation, flights from London, transfers, most meals, a 21-speed mountain bike, entry to the temples of Angkor and Discover Adventure support team.

Visit www.discoveradventure.com for more details.

the Killing Fields, where much of the genocide took place.

Although truly heartbreaking, these sites are important reminders of the horrors people went through.

It's on our bikes though, that we really get to see - and fall in love with - these enchanting countries.

We pedal through bustling towns and tiny villages, bounce across bridges, weave through narrow streets and cruise along country roads surrounded by lush rice paddies, banana and sugar plantations.

Seven days into the trip, my skin is gross, I'm bloated from all the sports drinks and I've worn nothing but grubby Lycra for a week - but I've also fallen head over heels in love with it all and can't imagine returning to a routine that doesn't start with a 6:30am wake-up call, involve seven hours on a bike and end with a beer and hobbly toddle to bed.

To soften the blow, our final day is a real treat - a short ride, which includes some super fun jungle tracks and ends in the breathtakingly beautiful ancient temples of Angkor.

We cross the finish line with mixed emotions: we did it! But oh, that means it's over. It's a bittersweet victory, but boy - what a ride

Film Reviews by Damon Smith



THE DANISH GIRL (15, 120 mins) Drama/Romance

THE Danish Girl is a fictionalised account of Lili Elbe, who was one of the first people to undergo gender reassignment surgery in the 1920s.

Director Tom Hooper adopts a restrained and painfully polite approach to the subject matter,

artfully navigating a maelstrom of conflicting emotions.

Thankfully, his British reserve doesn't get in the way of us connecting to the characters, aided by tour-de-force performances from Eddie Redmayne as Lili and the luminous Alicia Vikander as his conflicted wife.

Einar Wegener is a respected artist in 1920s Copenhagen, who falls in love at first sight with his bohemian wife Gerda. She is also a painter and asks Einar to stand in for an absent female model so she can complete a portrait.

The touch of soft fabric on Einar's skin awakens long-dormant feelings. Adopting the guise of flame-haired ingenue Lili Elbe, Einar confronts the deep-rooted belief that he has been born into the wrong body.

Supported by Gerda and childhood friend Hans Axgil, Lili approaches controversial surgeon

Warnekros to correct nature's mistake. However, the medical procedure is both experimental and highly dangerous, and Gerda might not only lose her husband on the operating table, but also Lili.

JOY (12A, 124 mins) Comedy/Drama/Romance

IN 1990, former airline reservations manager Joy Mangano developed a prototype for a self-wringing mop.

She invested heavily in her Miracle Mop, risking her home and some of her family's savings.

Following an appearance on a home shopping TV network, she sold thousands of her invention, laying the foundation stone of a business empire that boasts more than 150 million US dollars in sales every year.

Writer-director David O Russell celebrates this story in Joy.



Narrated by Joy's grandmother Mimi, we meet the title character following her divorce from her singer husband, Tony.

They remain good friends and Tony takes up residence in the basement of Joy's house, which she shares with her children, Mimi and her demanding mother Terry.

Out of the blue, Joy's father Rudy moves in. It's a recipe for disaster.

One afternoon, Joy cleans up shattered glasses filled with red wine using a traditional mop, cutting her hands in the process.

The idea for the Miracle Mop is born. Weathering scorn from her sister Peggy, Joy takes her prototype to Neil Walker, an executive at the QVC home shopping channel, who provides her with a platform to realise her dreams.

HAVING a wildlife-friendly garden doesn't have to mean a chaotic onslaught of weeds, nettles and overgrown areas. With a little forethought and a few changes, you could make your garden far more welcoming.

Bowling green lawns, weed-free beds, no debris and not a twig out of place may not be the best for wildlife, so relax a little and you may find your garden becomes more interesting.

Many of us don't want to make our garden into a small-scale nature reserve, but there are ways we can make it more attractive to wildlife while staying in control. Just carefully placing a couple of bird feeders and baths in strategic positions can welcome nature while remaining unobtrusive. Work out what features you would like – it may be a butterfly border, mini-woodland or meadow, or simply a bird-feeding station, but plan that to maximise the view you'll get of the wildlife activity from your patio and your house.

Also, get to know your weeds. Some garden plants and wildflowers will self-sow just as enthusiastically as weeds and are frequently treated as such. Enthusiastic self-seeders include foxglove, cow parsley, ox-eye daisy, columbine (aquilegia) and hellebore. Don't dig them out if you want to attract wildlife.

If they really aren't where you want them, move them to start a colony in a different place.

Grass can be a tricky issue if you



NATURALISTIC: There are steps to take to have a wildlife-friendly garden

Doing what comes naturally

don't have an area where you can leave it to grow longer. However, leaving a few low-growing flowering weeds such as clover and daisies will attract insects. Just cut the grass less frequently and leave it slightly longer. It doesn't have to be up to your knees.

Tidying your flower borders in spring rather than autumn is another tactic that will suit wildlife, as in-

sects and birds will welcome the shelter or food in winter. Weather-resistant perennials such as Sedum 'Herbstfreude' can be left standing, as their seedheads will provide wildlife with food and winter havens and provide shape for the winter garden.

In borders, ornamental thistles, grasses and other plants with seed-

filled heads like teasel and sunflowers will attract finches, while nectar-rich flowers including the coneflower (Echinacea purpurea), foxgloves, red valerian, and herbs such as chives, borage and thyme will attract bees and butterflies.

Beds containing old-fashioned cottage garden flowers or a collection of herbs and lavenders in a sunny, shel-

tered part of the garden will look wonderful as a double border with a path running through it and will be alive with insects.

Remember to plant nectar-rich plants that flower at the time when pollinating insects are emerging from or preparing for hibernation.

These include Cornus mas, Crocus tommasinianus and winter aconites,



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We must collect foreign fines

THE MP for Dover said that Kent Police failed to collect £170,000 in speeding fines from foreign drivers.

Perhaps if the government recovered this lost revenue by deducting it off the next police budget it might focus their attention on the problem at hand.

They should be stopping and fining these drivers on the spot or at the ports.

If they fail, or refuse to pay, their cars should be impounded and they should be arrested and put before the court.

A speeding foreign driver can kill or cause an accident, just the same as a British driver. It is therefore grossly unfair that Kent Police should prosecute British drivers whilst letting foreign drivers get away with it. That's discrimination.

The Kent chief constable stated, when he was appointed, he was going to have a root and branch reform of the county's police force.

I'd like to suggest he starts by cutting the dead wood out at the top of the tree as having £170,000 in unpaid fines clearly shows his force isn't fit for purpose.

Graham Stevens,
Faversham

Let animals just grow old and die

SO THE UN is telling us that meat production is inefficient, environmentally unfriendly and unsustainable, but instead of seriously looking for alternatives the answer (apparently) is to exploit the livestock who graze Kent Wildlife Trust's reserves [KoS, 03.01].

They will not be allowed to "simply grow old and die".

Believe me, you can live well without eating meat and it feels so good to know you are not responsible for the cruelty involved in modern factory farming, which in a nation of so called "animal lovers" is a disgrace.

I say peace to the animals in 2016 - not death.

Pauline V Moroney,
Chestfield

Prison visiting hours disgrace

AS WE enter a new year, I would like to draw your readers' attention to the plight of thousands of children across the UK. And the fact that the prison system is

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Kent on Sunday will:

- 1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
- 2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
- 3) Be written in clear, concise English.

LETTER OF THE WEEK



Lorry drivers need facilities not insults

I REFER to your article "Green light for more clamping power on illegally parked lorries" (KoS 13.12).

Unfortunately, it appears that those people and organisations mentioned in your article are blissfully ignorant of the extreme difficulties truckers face daily, that can and do adversely affect their health and wellbeing and, indirectly, that of other road users.

I imagine that such folk are likely to be prominent among those that whine when they find shelves in shops are empty due to the fact that lorry drivers have been unable to complete their deliveries efficiently and on time!

The road haulage industry has expanded markedly over the last 100 years but, in contrast, essential facilities for drivers have largely disappeared or have, perhaps, been replaced by 'fast-food' outlets like McDonalds. Thus, toilets and parking facilities for truckers using the trunk and county road system, especially

those driving large (44 ton) rigs, are often difficult to find. There is also the very important and relevant issue of compliance with driver regulations and requisite rest periods.

Consequently, due to the totally inadequate provision of public toilets and suitable lorry parking, the hinterland of many lay-bys alongside trunk and county roads are now seriously contaminated.

It is entirely unhelpful on the part of those who complain of illegal parking unless, of course, they are willing and able to provide practical, cost-effective solutions to the problems they grumble about. Clearly, these problems can no longer be ignored: the Government, Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Authorities must make it a priority to provide adequate funding to rid the countryside of this inevitable public nuisance.

Raymond A Bulpit
Andover

'enhanced' status of four or more visiting hours has fallen by 16 per cent.

But children with a parent in prison are the innocent victims of someone else's crime.

They struggle with the heart-break of having their parent suddenly taken away, and often don't understand why.

Intensifying that loss by taking away precious hours with their parent, or making visits unnecessarily uncomfortable, will only punish the children.

That's why Barnardo's is calling for an end to family visits being

used to discipline prisoners. Having a parent in prison can leave children more likely to develop mental health issues, underperform at school, and tragically go on to offend themselves.

The Ministry of Justice's Children of Offenders Review found 65 per cent of boys with a convicted parent go on to offend, but that regular visiting can help cut dads' re-offending by 39 per cent.

It's time for a sea change in the way these overlooked and isolated children are treated.

Government and prisons must work together to ensure that the visiting system, whilst recognising the need for security, never punishes children.

Jonathan Whalley,
Director, Barnardo's South East

We need a new crossing now

I NOTICE Gravesham council are against option 'C' for a river crossing.

I doubt whether any of its members have to put up with the daily worry and stress of wondering whether they will get through the existing tunnel in good time and hoping there isn't a gale later in the day to shut the bridge.

The traffic load going north to south and vice versa is such that a separate road system coupled with a tunnel, not a bridge for obvious reasons, is a necessity, not in ten years but now.

Loading more traffic through the environs of Dartford will mean that existing roads will jam up creating an even bigger problem for traffic in north west Kent and south east London.

Not only are local councillors failing to push for a new crossing but those MPs whose constituencies border the Thames are equally at fault for their ambivalent attitude to this vital project.

Twenty five years ago, a plan was instigated for a new crossing.

A few years ago, a construction company offered to build a new crossing in exchange for the toll money. That suggestion was soon thrown out.

No one is giving up the easy money that tolls provide.

There is a complete lack of forward vision and decision making both locally and nationally. Compared with government decision making, a snail on mogodon looks like speedy Gonzales.

John Baker,
via email

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 4) Not be overly sensational.
- 5) Have a sense of humour.
- 6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
- 7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
- 8) Highlight topical issues of concern to

people living in the county.

9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.

10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.



Aylesford

by **Paul Wilkinson**

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NEWEST CONVERT: the RAV4 is now available with hybrid power

Prius leads Toyota hybrid charge

BRAND UPDATE: At times we doubted the wisdom of Toyota's dogged support for hybrids against diesel power. Now it looks a shrewd bet...

TOYOTA'S commitment to petrol-electric hybrids now looks less of a gamble as diesel engine technology enters 2016 with a seriously tarnished image, following the VW scandal and increasing concerns about emissions.

And though Toyota makes diesels too, the fuel's fall from grace couldn't be better timed for the world's biggest motor manufacturer as it shifts up a gear on the hybrid front.

It closed 2015 with the arrival of a new look RAV4 range with revised powertrains and, for the first time, a hybrid variant of the model that launched the whole SUV sector.

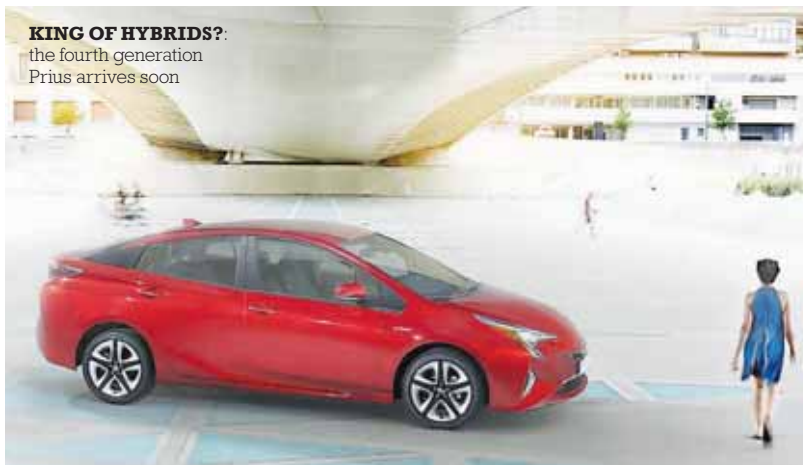
And hybrid power had already been reinforced earlier in the year with revised versions of the Japanese marque's popular Yaris supermini and Auris family hatchback and Touring Sports Wagon – estate car to you and me – which have long featured petrol-electric options.

But early in this New Year, comes Toyota's hybrid pièce de résistance: the latest Prius, the fourth generation of the world's most famous hybrid, originally launched in 1997.

Toyota says it is easily the most efficient Prius yet, with CO2 emissions from 70g/km and combined fuel economy from 94.2mpg, yet still capable of 0-62mph acceleration in 10.6 seconds.

Such dramatic improvement was enabled by a

KING OF HYBRIDS?:
the fourth generation
Prius arrives soon



major redesign to save weight, improve efficiency and boost aerodynamics.

A more compact yet powerful battery helps too, bringing better performance and easier packaging completely beneath the back seat, avoiding any compromise to boot space – the bane of hybrid and electric cars.

It is also the first Prius able to pull a trailer; it has a 725 kg towing capacity (unbraked).

Will it be more fun to drive though? Toyota says yes, thanks to a more rigid bodyshell – 60 per cent better than the 3G model – and a revised rear suspension for better handling and stability, plus passenger comfort.

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Jeep's Renegade - going its own way

Jeep's impressive new FIAT-inspired junior model sees the US 4x4 legend take a new yet no less rugged path writes **Steve Loader...**

It's hard to think of a better name than Renegade for Jeep's newest and smallest model.

For it really is a car apart: a rebel and charting a new direction for the legendary American 4x4 brand.

On the face of it, the Renegade (from £17,295) is yet another mid crossover - part SUV/4x4 cum family hatch and people carrier - contesting a sector already rammed like a rush hour Tube station.

But it's the first genuinely all-new Jeep for nearly ten years, the first significant co-operation between Jeep and new owner FIAT, and the first Jeep built outside the US - UK stock comes from Italy.

It also benefits from small yet punchy powertrains (two petrol and three diesel) not readily available to Jeeps in the past, plus an upweight in cabin quality.

It is also largely based on the FIAT 500X, the Italian marque's own likeable crossover contender, and yet the Jeep - in true renegade style - stands apart by being available with decent 4x4 ability in the brand's great tradition.

It is different visually too: the 500X is fluid and chic while the Jeep is in yer face, with no pretence



towards 'funky chunky' style - so, what you might call 'renegade' then.

This might deter some buyers, but attract those who feel that SUVs and crossovers have become too effete and unlikely to yomp across fields, something the 4x4 Renegades variants should do with ease.

Indeed, the Renegade is capable of a lot more, not because it is a traditional Jeep so much as a derivative of FIAT's own Panda 4x4 series: where Jeeps always conquered rough terrain, the Panda 4x4's lightness sort of enabled it to ride above it.



The 140bhp two-litre diesel in the up-spec Limited 4x4 (£25,995) test car certainly felt capable during modest off-roading, thanks to decent ground clearance and various simple terrain settings.

However, I never felt that there had been a compromise to deliver such

Jeep Renegade 2.0 140 dsl Limited

Price:	from £25,995
Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★★
Value:	★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★
How green?:	★★★★
Best rival:	Skoda Yeti

off-road ability: it proved lively and well-sorted on-road and cruised well with its clean-shifting six-speed manual gearbox.

For sheer driving fun and refinement, it falls short of those Mazda stars, the CX-3 and CX-5, and the Nissan Qashqai and Skoda Yeti, but only the Yeti (in Outdoor 4x4 guise) challenges the Jeep off-road.

The interior is well-trimmed too - leather seats as standard on Limited models - with good and high all-around visibility, enhanced by a relatively low window line and lots of glass, though the excessively thick windscreen pillars are major blind spots.

The Renegade's boxy body delivers lots of space, easily accessed via particularly wide-opening doors, while the 351-litre boot - offering a 1,297-litre load space with rear seats down - is impressive in this class.

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 MPG figures are official EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. [#]Official fuel figures for the Isuzu Yukon Manual in mpg (l/100km): Urban 31.7 (8.9), Extra Urban 44.1 (6.4), Combined 38.7 (7.3). CO₂ emissions 192g/km. For model specific figures please contact us directly or visit www.isuzu.co.uk
[†]Price shown is an Isuzu Yukon Extended Cab CVOTR with manual transmission, automatic transmission also available from £21,499 CVOTR. Commercial vehicle on the road price includes delivery, number plates, 12 months road fund licence and first registration fee, excludes VAT. *5 year/125,000 miles (whichever comes first) warranty applies to all new Isuzu D-Max models. Special paint finishes extra at £400 excluding VAT. Finance options available at participating dealers, subject to status. Terms and conditions apply.
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This exciting new river cruise takes in five cities and two kingdoms. Join us on board our private charter of MPS Princess with great food and service and a fun and friendly atmosphere. We start in Amsterdam and have a full day and two evenings to explore before sailing to Kinderdijk, which has 19 windmills and a landscape straight from a Rembrandt masterpiece before heading for a harbour cruise in Rotterdam. Sailing into Belgium, we visit the city of Antwerp - the diamond capital - and the stunning architecture of Ghent before arriving in Bruges with a full day and two evenings in this beautiful town before returning to the UK.

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31 August, 2016 - Quote RN8

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INCLUDED: Escorted return rail travel from London St Pancras or Ebbsfleet to Brussels and coach to Cologne or return flights with luggage from a choice of UK airports to Cologne - supp't may apply • 7-night full board cruise sharing a twin bed, main deck rear cabin - upgrades available • Beer, wine by the glass, and soft drinks served at lunch and dinner and from 6pm to midnight at the bar • Entertainment • Transfers abroad • GN Cruise Team on board



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22 September, 2016 • Quote RR9

Join us for a scenic, fun-packed cruise onboard the 4-star mps Rembrandt Van Rijn taking in Cologne, Koblenz, Cochem, Zell, Rudesheim and Boppard, where you'll see the Rhine in Flames festival. Originally held to celebrate the grape harvest, this spectacular pyrotechnics show also features an illuminated flotilla of riverboats. Also enjoy the Boppard Wine Festival featuring wines from local vineyards, live music and entertainment.

INCLUDED: Escorted return rail travel from London St Pancras or Ebbsfleet to Brussels and coach to Cologne or return flights with luggage from a choice of UK airports to Cologne - supp't may apply • 7 nights full board cruise sharing a twin outside main deck rear cabin - upgrades available • Beer, wine and soft drinks with lunch and dinner and from 6pm to midnight at the bar • Captains Dinner • Entertainment • Transfers abroad • GN Cruise Team on board

Spencer Private Hospitals are two hospitals situated in East Kent. The larger of the two hospitals is a 22 bed independent hospital situated at the QEOM Hospital in Margate, whilst the second hospital is a 4 bed independent hospital based at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford. Both hospitals have a reputation for providing excellent medical and surgical facilities supported by Specialist Consultants, Specialist Nurses and Physiotherapists. We have state of the art diagnostic equipment and exceptionally high standards of nursing care

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Network Engineer – Dover- 6 Month Fixed Term Contract

Full time Hours: 37.5 per week Closing date: 15/01/2016

Salary: £25-30,000 per annum (dependant on experience)

Experience and Qualifications

- Microsoft MCSA Qualification
- Minimum 5 years' experience working within an IT network/ system engineering role

Expert working knowledge and experience of:

- Microsoft Windows Client and Server Operating Systems
- Microsoft Office 365 and Hybrid Deployment Scenarios
- Active Directory Domain Services such as Group Policy
- Microsoft Enterprise Solutions such as SQL Server, Share Point, Exchange and Skype

Interviews for this role will be held on 22 January 2016

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact: Steve Barrett, IT Manager, 01304 222663.

Senior Physiotherapist – Ashford

Full time Hours: 37.5 per week Closing date: 18/01/2016

Salary: £30-35,000 per annum (dependant on experience)

Experience and Qualifications

- BSc/Equivalent in Physiotherapy
- Member of CSP
- HCPC Registration
- 5-7 years post graduate experience
- Proven clinical experience in the delivery of Orthopaedic and MSK Physiotherapy

Interviews for this role will be held on 25 January 2016

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact: Adebayo Tijani, Physiotherapy Manager on 07479 987931.

For a job description and application form please visit www.spencerprivatehospitals.com/careers Alternatively, please contact Justine Whittle, HR Assistant

Telephone: 01304 222684 E-mail: recruitment@spencerhospitals.com

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Required February 2016

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Have a positive cheerful attitude and be able to work well independently and as part of a team.

Be responsible for the keeping of attendance data, new admissions and updating pupil records.

Have the ability to work methodically with accuracy and attention to detail.

Have a good knowledge of SIMS, Microsoft Word and Microsoft Publisher.

Linda Dwight, Business Manager
Meopham Community Academy
01474 812259



Chrysalis Care Fostering Agency are looking to appoint a **Placements & Referrals Officer** who is enthusiastic and self motivated with an excellent telephone manner. The post involves taking referrals from Local Authorities and helping identify suitable foster placements. An interest in the needs of looked after children is essential.

This is a full time post, Monday to Friday 9.30am-5.30pm

Salary range £19,000 – £24,500 per annum

Please contact Sue Inman on 0208 298 2800 or sue.inman@chrysaliscare.org for further details and/or an application form

Closing date: 29th January 2016



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To apply please submit with your application a letter outlining your reasons for wanting this position, together with evidence of why you are suitable for the role, and how you have developed your skills in previous roles in readiness for this position.

Further details and application forms may be obtained from our HR Manager by email at k.mcgowan@thamesview.kent.sch.uk or by telephoning 01474 566552 ext 1120.

Further details and an application forms may be obtained from our HR Manager by email at k.mcgowan@thamesview.kent.sch.uk

or by telephoning 01474 566552 ext 1120

Closing Date: 18th January 2016 at 9.00 am

Interviews: w/c 25th January 2016

CVs without an application form will not be accepted.

Appointment to this post is subject to a criminal background check via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

Licensing Act 2003

Application for a Premises Licence

Name of Applicant: Thayalini Nanthakumar

Premises: U2 Forget Me Nots – Unit 2, Warden Bay Road, Leysdown, Kent, ME12 4NA

Current Licensable activities:

Sale of Alcohol : Monday – Saturday 08.00 – 23.00
Sunday 10.00 – 22.30 Good Friday 08.00 – 22.30
Christmas Day 12.00 – 15.00 & 19.00 – 22.30

Opening hours : Monday – Saturday 08.00 – 23.00
Sunday 10.00 – 22.30 Good Friday 08.00 – 22.30
Christmas Day 12.00 – 15.00 & 19.00 – 22.30

Proposed Variations :

Change the layout of the premises

Date of Notice : 25th December 2015

Any objections to this application must be made in writing to The Licensing Department

Swale Borough Council
Swale House
East Street
Sittingbourne
Kent, ME10 3HT

Objections must be received within 28 days of the date of this notice.

It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. Any person who makes a false statement is liable, on summary conviction, to a maximum fine of £5,000

PUBLIC NOTICE LICENSING ACT 2003

Notice is hereby given that Musa Kivrat has applied to Maidstone Borough Council for the grant of a new premises licence for 113 Week Street Maidstone Kent ME14 1RB on the date of: 23rd December 2015. Summary of the proposed licensable activities: Late Night Refreshment 23.00hours to 03.00 hours the following day Monday to Sunday. Sale by retail of alcohol from 10.00hours to 03.00 the following day Monday to Sunday for consumption off the premises. Any person wishing to view details of an application may contact the Licensing Partnership on 01732 227004. Any person wishing to make representation about the application should make them in writing on or before the 20th January 2016 to Licensing Partnership, PO BOX 182 Sevenoaks Kent TN13 1GP, [licensing@sevenoaks.gov.uk](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk), <http://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-licensing>. It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. The maximum fine for which a person is liable on summary of conviction for the offence is £5000.





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Women Seeking

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LUCY, 32, blonde, tall and slim, looking for a casual fling, nothing serious. Discretion needed and assured. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420237

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with kind 40+. Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3000 Box 419673

DANCE partner 65-75 sought by Maureen, Thanet based lady, slim, brown hair, green eyes, seeking dancing, fun and friendship Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420231

DISCREET man wanted by married lady for no strings fun. I'm called Sarah and am 37yrs. Pls call. ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 3004 Box 418167

SINGLE slim female, 68, n/s, GSOH, likes cooking, walking etc, seeks male, single, slim 65-70, n/s, with similar interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420091

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 3008 Box: 409715

SLIM female GSOH, 53, Likes walking, pub lunches, days out, looking for soul mate, smart appearance, similar interests N/S GSOH, easy going. Text only to Mailbox no: 472600

MAUREEN, discreet sensual lady, 42yrs seeks daytime fun at her home. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3012 Box: 405297

MARIE, very lonely middle-aged woman, looking for a kind hearted older man, late 70s/early 80s for friendship/companionship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418955

KIND lady, 50s, been broken hearted, seeks kind, genuine man for caring relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419889

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. Tel: 0906 515 3016 Box: 413399

PAT, slim, single, 68, non-smoker, GSOH, likes going for walks etc, seeks male, single, slim, 66-70, non-smoker, clean-shaven, GSOH, with similar interests. Canterbury area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419081

FELICITY, 38yrs, attractive, petite but shapely lady seeks gent for indoor activities! Age/looks/marital status unimportant but must be discreet and non demanding. Tel: 0906 515 3020 Box 420235

MARION, early 70s, young at heart, GSOH, active, likes walking, gardening, meals out, travel, theatre and animals, looking for male friendship to share interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419657

CHLOE, pretty brunette, 30yrs good job but lacking male with a naughty side, is that you, age unimportant. Text only to Mailbox no: 4057558

CHANTELLE, 5ft3 light brown/blonde hair, blue eyes, like nights in/out, walks, animals, romance seeks honest guy, Littlehampton. Text only to Mailbox no: 4923883

MELANIE, tanned, toned, young 41yrs divorcee with own flat, working, solvent, just missing a chap. Text only to Mailbox no: 4112160

BLONDE female, 5ft 11ins, size 12, likes meals out, drinks, nights in, walks, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409025

RACHEL late 40s, blonde, blue eyes and very voluptuous. Looking for a kind, caring honest man. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418741

ESSEX lady, mid 60's, adaptable, seeking nice male, likes most things. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418537

AMANDA, 36, tall, slim, busty brunette seeks man, any age, any area, for discreet daytime fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418117

HELEN, widow 58, medium build, 5ft 4ins, blonde, GSOH, likes a chat, days out, looking to start again with someone of similar age. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 376243

FEMALE, 59, GSOH, many interests, seeks caring male for friendship maybe more, genuine calls only. Text only to Mailbox No: 4819793

GORGEOUS flower, Ashford Kent, 51, larger lady, large personality, easy going, seeks male who likes dogs, animals for relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417435

FEMALE easy going, kind, loving, genuine, romantic, car boots, gardening, seeking male with GSOH. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417603

PAT, 68, young at heart, slim, proud 4' 11" GSOH, N/S, likes walking etc Whistable area, seeks similar slim easy going male 60-70. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419081

SUSIE fit, friendly, looking for someone to love and look after me, preferably older, N/S male with own car. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 392537

HAPPY young looking lady, 62, likes socialising, conversation, seeking nice man to share good times with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407383

KATIE, 5ft 5, slim dark hair, very attractive female, likes most things in life and a good laugh, looking for a similar male. Text only to Mailbox No: 4722127

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

NICE female looking for decent genuine male for friendship to start out with. Text only to Mailbox No: 4710874

JAN 63, young at heart, petite, 5ft 2ins, brown hair, blue eyes, GSOH, likes cooking, countryside, travel, days out, seeks easy going male, 60-70. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416349

ATTRACTIVE lady early 50's, petite, Scandinavian blonde professional, WLTW professional, caring gent, 50-60's for attention and future together. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416569

ANGIE attractive nurse 39yrs, now to area/advertising, likes dog walking, being sociable, meals in/out, WLTW honest, fun male for possible tr. looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415827

RACHEL attractive, blue eyes, blonde, voluptuous, seeking kind, honest, generous kind male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418403

JAN 63, young at heart, petite, 5ft 2ins, brown hair, blue eyes, GSOH, likes cooking, countryside, travel, days out, seeks easy going male, 60-70. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416349

ALISON 39, petite with long brown hair, hazel eyes, very loving, seeking similar male for an uncomplicated relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416517

ALISON 30, pretty, slim with long brown hair, fit and active seeks fit older male for energetic relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416497

DEBORAH 41, intelligent, brunette, lovely brown eyes, discreet, many interests, seeks similar male to share fun and good conversation. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416515

ATTRACTIVE black, athletic lady, varied interests, seeks similar white, old fashioned, genuine male for relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416215

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HEALTHY 61yr old male, N/S, medium build, likes France, cooking, gardening, seeks female, 50-60 for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 286360

DAVID, 39yrs, divorced with no ties, lovely flat in Spain, seeks travel companion, single mums welcome. Text only to Mailbox no: 414225

ATTRACTIVE white gent, 48, 56ft, romantic, easy going, GSOH, seeking young lady, 60-75 for quality discreet fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410025

BROWN eyed white mature, handsome male, seeking black female, 18-50 for discreet no strings adult fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410377

SIX foot guy, mature, looking for someone special to spend some quality time with. Please leave me a message I would love to hear from you! Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420163

MALE 56, likes good conversation, seeks older lady for discreet friendly fun, 50 plus. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419201

CLINT, 37, kind, caring, honest and WLTW someone of any age who is similar and looking for a relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419951

NEVILLE 5ft 6ins, Caribbean, like wine, nights in, seeks female to spend the rest of his life with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 333911

MALE 50, GSOH, looking for soul mate. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 387485

MAY sexy black African female, 38, hardworking, seeks generous friendly male for mutual rewarding friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416211

SUE young at heart, good looking, enjoy life, socialising, beach walks, gardening, theatre, seeking male, 55-65 to share life with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416171

JACKIE 32, attractive professional, very smart and feminine, long brown hair, seeks smart, confident, older male who knows how to treat a lady. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416297

BECKY 23, classy blonde, long blonde hair, blue eyes seeks 'loving' older guy to spoil and pamper her. Discretion assured/guaranteed. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416233

LINDA 26, cheeky, curvy brunette, a little shy at first, likes to look after herself, seeks dark haired male for discreet naughty but fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416195

FEMALE seeking male for adult fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413809

PAUL 48, 5ft 8ins, GSOH, likes music, cinema, seeks female for friendship and LTR. Tunbridge Wells. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 371985

MALE 51, 5ft 8ins, N/S, GSOH, easygoing, seeks slim female, 18-45 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 338269

ROCKABILLY guy, seeks rock chick, 25-50 who likes 50's rock music and bands. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 284750

WHITE Knight 59 5'10 tall, OHAC, in shining armour, looking for Damsel in Distress of similar age to share fun & laughter. Text only to Mailbox no: 5073004

CALM, kind and good company, male seeking a lovely lady for good times and fun and loving. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419733

50YR old divorced white male, passionate, strong, seeking caring lady for romantic, loving relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418641

MALE 47, builder, seeks lady for companionship and closeness, age and looks unimportant. Text only to Mailbox no: 4924811

MATTHEW, five foot eleven, looking for a mature lady for discreet friendship and a few laughs. Dartford area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419469

45 year old male, looking for a happy intelligent friendly female for company and evenings in or out, looks or race unimportant. Text only to Mailbox no: 5063649

NICE looking genuine man would like to meet nice lady any age for company, outings with GSOH. Text only to Mailbox no: 4922399

MALE, 39, tall, hardworking, 6ft 2, looking for long-term lover/older woman. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418877

MICK 50, seeks attractive female for nice times out, genuine calls only. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417691

PAUL 49 5ft 8ins likes eating/nights in/out seeks loving female for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 404013

PAUL GSOH, 5ft 8ins, medium build, seeking Miss Right for LTR to put the spark back into life. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 391970

PROFESSIONAL, romantic male, 44, likes meals out, cinema, music, holidays, seeks female, 30-55 for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 250195

ANDREW, 63, likes animals, walking, boot fares, shop ping, looking for someone similar living in the Maidstone/Kent area, for possible LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419203

RICHARD 59 from East Kent. WLTW genuine female 50 plus for friendship! Text only to Mailbox No: 4448765

MALE 56 yrs, GSOH, n/s, would like to meet a lady to have happy times, lots of love to give, to enjoy good times in and out. Text only to Mailbox No: 4181244

MIKE from Canterbury 57, medium build, GSOH, varied interests, sign language interpreter, seeks slim female, 21-42 for LTR. Single mum welcome. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 379673

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50YR old divorced white male, passionate, strong, seeking caring lady for romantic, loving relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418641

MALE 47, builder, seeks lady for companionship and closeness, age and looks unimportant. Text only to Mailbox no: 4924811

MATTHEW, five foot eleven, looking for a mature lady for discreet friendship and a few laughs. Dartford area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419469

45 year old male, looking for a happy intelligent friendly female for company and evenings in or out, looks or race unimportant. Text only to Mailbox no: 5063649

NICE looking genuine man would like to meet nice lady any age for company, outings with GSOH. Text only to Mailbox no: 4922399

MALE, 39, tall, hardworking, 6ft 2, looking for long-term lover/older woman. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418877



REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

PAUL 48, 5ft 8ins, GSOH, likes music, cinema, seeks female for friendship and LTR. Tunbridge Wells. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 371985

MALE 51, 5ft 8ins, N/S, GSOH, easygoing, seeks slim female, 18-45 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 338269

ROCKABILLY guy, seeks rock chick, 25-50 who likes 50's rock music and bands. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 284750

WHITE Knight 59 5'10 tall, OHAC, in shining armour, looking for Damsel in Distress of similar age to share fun & laughter. Text only to Mailbox no: 5073004

CALM, kind and good company, male seeking a lovely lady for good times and fun and loving. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419733

50YR old divorced white male, passionate, strong, seeking caring lady for romantic, loving relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418641

MALE 47, builder, seeks lady for companionship and closeness, age and looks unimportant. Text only to Mailbox no: 4924811

MATTHEW, five foot eleven, looking for a mature lady for discreet friendship and a few laughs. Dartford area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419469

45 year old male, looking for a happy intelligent friendly female for company and evenings in or out, looks or race unimportant. Text only to Mailbox no: 5063649

NICE looking genuine man would like to meet nice lady any age for company, outings with GSOH. Text only to Mailbox no: 4922399

MALE, 39, tall, hardworking, 6ft 2, looking for long-term lover/older woman. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418877

M A L E 57, seeking honest, reliable, genuine lady for friendship. Maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418535

50YR old divorced white male, passionate, strong, seeking caring lady for romantic, loving relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 390929

49YR old male, 6ft, well built, seeks female to wind/ine and have fun with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 390929

48YR old divorced male, 6ft, well built, seeks lady for fun and laughter. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380789

Gay Seeking

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

BI guy heavy build, WLTW assertive adventurous white or Indian guy for mutual pleasure. Text only to Mailbox no: 4321273

SUBMISSIVE bi male, clean and shaven, looking for similar male, n/s, for adult fun, can accommodate. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420413

SENIOR bi male, 70s, n/s, clean-shaven, living in the Maidstone area, seeking similar bi male, aged 50-60, in the Maidstone area, for myself to give service to. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420219

JESSICA, 53 yrs old, feminine, sexy, smooth body seeking gay or bi man for fun, must be non-smoker. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418713

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Fleet teen Tracey set to join Spurs

Daryl McMahon says the move is a 'fantastic opportunity'

Football

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

EBBSFLEET United boss Daryl McMahon has confirmed that midfielder Shilow Tracey is on the verge of joining Premier League side Tottenham.

The 17-year-old was on trial in North London back in October, and Spurs have now renewed their interest in Tracey, who has attracted the attention of a number of Football League clubs.

But after completing a medical earlier in the week, it appears Mauricio Pochettino's side have won the race for Tracey, with the transfer expected to be formally completed over the weekend for an undisclosed fee.

McMahon told KoS: "It's pretty close to being done, hopefully it'll be sorted in the next couple of days.

"We don't see it as him being taken away from us, it's a fantastic opportunity for Shilow and it's great news for us as it shows our academy is bearing fruit.

"We've got a good relationship with Tottenham and we know they like to develop young, creative players and hopefully he can thrive in that kind of environment where there are some excellent coaches."

While McMahon rates Tracey highly, he is wary of putting too much pressure on the teenager.

"There's obviously been a lot of talk recently about Jamie Vardy and how he's gone from non-league to the Premier League," he said.

"I think it's important we just let him develop and improve at his own pace, rather than setting the bar too high for him.

"But he's a talented boy and he



TRANSFER: Shilow Tracey and Ebbsfleet United boss Daryl McMahon

should fit in well there."

In other news, the club have snapped up former Antwerp left-back Bryan van den Bogaert as they look to continue their good form which sees them sit comfortably at the top of the National League South.

The much-needed signing was made on Tuesday to reinforce a defence that has been increasingly light on bodies in recent weeks.

McMahon said: "We're pleased with Bryan, he's had a few sessions now and has settled in very well.

"He has all the attributes we were looking for in a good defender and he likes to get forward as well.

"We've had a fantastic campaign so far, but we've only done half the job so it's massively important to stay focussed and finish the season as strongly as we can."

Maloney launches new Bromley boxing gym

Boxing

LEGENDARY boxing manager and promoter Kellie Maloney is to act as an ambassador for a new boxing club in Bromley which launches this weekend.

Uppercutz has been set up as a charity to encourage aspiring young boxers to get into the ring, enabling them to become physically fit and to learn invaluable life skills.

The club is run by Ian Melin of Petts Wood, who works for a City hedge fund, and has been coaching young boxers in his spare time for many years.

His coaching talent was first recognised by Maloney, formerly known as Frank, when they met at a local gym.



MALONEY: Boxing legend is to launch a new club in Bromley

Maloney rose to fame as manager of formidable boxer Lennox Lewis, a former British world heavyweight champion.

She said: "Boxing is so important to me and has been throughout my

life. It is what has kept me sane.

"I'm so pleased that my own love of the sport has inspired Ian to coach the next generation of boxers. I look forward to being involved with the club and hope to do some coaching there myself."

Melin has transformed a disused football clubhouse into a fully-equipped boxing gym, boasting a 14ft ring, 10 punch bags, circuit training and all the latest gym equipment.

Bromley council leader Stephen Carr said: "I have been enormously impressed with the enthusiasm of Mr Melin and his team for making their vision come to life.

"I have always believed boxing to be a great sport, not only for fitness but more importantly teaching young people discipline and respect."

Sport Shorts

» Email sports@kosmedia.co.uk or call Tom Pyman on 01233653477

Gills blow chance to go top after Wigan defeat

GILLINGHAM threw away a 2-0 lead and missed the opportunity to go top of the League One table as they suffered a late defeat to Wigan Athletic on Thursday night.

Justin Edinburgh's in-form side - who had won three games on the bounce prior to their trip to the DW Stadium - were well in control of the game after goals from Dominic Samuel and Rory Donnelly, but failed to find a third that surely would have killed the game as a contest.

Instead, the hosts rallied and were on level terms in the second half through Will Grigg and Max Power who scored in the 64th and 67th minutes respectively.

Captain Craig Morgan then rose in the 96th minute to head home the winner, and condemn the Gills to a disappointing defeat.

The result left the club second in the table, although they have now played two more games than both Burton Albion and Walsall, who sit either side of the Gills in the hunt for promotion.



FRUSTRATION: Boss Justin Edinburgh



COMMERCIAL: Joe Root was among those at the Beckenham ground

County Ground stars in television advert

THE County Ground in Beckenham was the location for the launch of a new advertising campaign.

The advert aired during television coverage of England's Test series in South Africa, and features among others vice-captain Joe Root.

The world number two Test batsman joined cricketers from Old Wilsonians and HSBC Cricket Clubs to shoot a series of adverts for sponsors Vitality Health and Life Insurance that are appearing on Sky Sports' live cricket coverage this winter.

More than 25 crew members joined the cricketers, Root and his manager, former England player Neil Fairbrother and groundsman Paul Whittaker even made a cameo appearance during the brief commercial.

The Ashes and County Championship winner flew by private helicopter from Yorkshire for the six-hour shoot and signed shirts and some items for the cricketers which were auctioned to raise funds for Bromley District Cricket's chosen charity PAPYRUS.

Maidstone fixture rearranged

MAIDSTONE United's league fixture against Sutton United scheduled for January 16 has been rearranged.

The decision was made after Jay Saunders' side beat Lowestoft Town 3-1 to take their place in the second round of the FA Trophy.

Sutton have been playing catch up in the competition after gaining a reprieve after their defeat to

Concord Rangers in an earlier round.

The new date for the National League South game has been announced as Tuesday February 23.

The two sides met on the opening day of the season - Sutton's first league game on their new 3G pitch - in what the pundits described as 'El Plastico'.

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